Problems in Education and Philosophy

Charles J. Brauner
and
Hobert W. Burns

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PRENTICE-HALL INTERNATIONAL, INC., *London*
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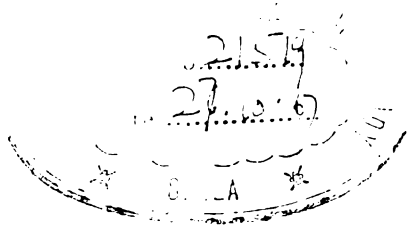

Current printing (last digit):
12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION SERIES
PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY
BY CHARLES J. BRAUNER
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Library of Congress
Catalog Card No.: 65–17813

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
C–71626-c C–71625-P

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and with thanks to
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Public education is the "growth industry" of the nation today. Next to defense, education is the single largest enterprise in our political economy and, unlike even defense, it is the one American activity that in some way or at some time directly involves every single citizen.

If public education is quantitatively important, then the training of teachers is one of the most qualitatively important undertakings of the entire educational enterprise. Indeed, the training of teachers is already the single largest undertaking of American higher education, since more college graduates enter the profession of teaching than any other vocation, and it may well be the most important undertaking of our colleges and universities.

Even so, despite the size of the American educational establishment, it is remarkable how little is understood of the educative process, especially of the intellectual bases of education that support all pedagogy; and of all those who have—in the language of defense rather than education—a "need to know," the prospective teacher has the greatest need.

Prospective teachers need to understand education through the historical perspective of Western culture—and so the series includes a volume in the history of education, a volume that may fairly be called an intellectual history of education, rather than a mere chronology of educationally important dates or historically important pedagogues.

Prospective teachers need to understand that the school, and the children and teachers in it, are social organisms inevitably influenced by the nature of the society in which they exist—and so the series includes a volume in the sociology of education, a volume showing how the public school reflects, for better or worse, the reality rather than the image of contemporary American society.

Prospective teachers need to understand the psychological nature of children and how it limits, if not determines, what schools should or should not do (Is it reasonable to expect, as many teachers do, a six- or seven-year-old to sit quietly and attentively for a major portion of his waking day?)—and so the series includes a volume in the psychology of education, a volume that pays particular attention to the ways in which children grow, develop, mature, learn, and change their behavior.

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Prospective teachers need to understand the close functional relationship between philosophy and practice in education and, at the same time, to see that many of the practical problems they will face as teachers (e.g., How shall I grade? Shall I use drill? Should children be segregated on such bases as talent, color, or religion?) are solvable only in terms of prior philosophic inquiry—and so the series includes a volume in philosophy of education, a volume that views philosophy as dressed in the working clothes of a practical discipline rather than in the formal attire of impractical abstractions.

Prospective teachers need perspective to see the historical, philosophical, social, and psychological foundations of education in a context both different and larger than any one locality, region, or nation affords—and so the series includes a volume in comparative education, a volume designed to help the teacher compare and contrast his experience and educational system with the experiences and systems of other teachers in other nations and cultures.

These things the prospective teacher needs to know; he needs to be well grounded in the foundations of education, for they represent the intellectual tools that can give him scholarly leverage in his profession. But, given the thinness of time and the immensity of need in teacher education curriculums, how is this to be done?

The authors of this series believe that no single volume, be it a large, well-edited book of readings or a long treatise by one scholar, can meet the challenge of offering prospective teachers what they need to know as well as can a series of smaller volumes, each written by a specialist in one particular aspect of the foundations of education. Each volume in this series, by design, can stand alone as an introduction to an intellectual discipline; but when taken together the volumes unite these independent yet related disciplines into a series that offers prospective teachers a fuller, more unified introduction to the subject matters that underlie the profession of teaching.

We are convinced that prospective teachers who study these volumes in the foundations of education, and who discuss the concepts and issues presented with their instructors, will take to their future classrooms a firmer understanding not only of how to do the teaching job at hand but, more significant, of why their teaching job is so surpassingly important.

Hobert W. Burns

CONTENTS

The underlying design of this book is to approach the methods and materials in a philosophy *of* education through a presentation and analysis of problems *in* education, a design that might well be called a "problems approach." Consequently, the text is not filled with a highly specialized nomenclature or the often bewildering array of labels characteristic of standard introductory texts, but it offers, instead, a set of educational problems, each with a distinctly philosophic aspect.

We elected this approach because students are frequently able to articulate abstract concepts in philosophy and in education without, at the same time, truly grasping the organic relationship between them. As the problems are presented and examined, an attempt is made to "weave in" those philosophic considerations pertinent to the analysis and understanding of the problems, the better to demonstrate the functional role philosophy plays in education.

Three criteria were used to select the problems. First, each problem had to be of some immediate concern to educators, to have roots in the day-to-day business of education. Second, each had to lend itself to the exhibition of the different sides of educational philosophy, viewed

both as method and content. Finally, each had to be a problem that beginning students—soon to begin teaching—could grasp emotionally as well as intellectually; that is, problems that are likely to be seen and felt as important and significant.

Since there is no one commonly accepted "philosophy of education," a major obligation of an introductory text—unless it seeks to indoctrinate—is to point out that the scope, sequence, content, and method of philosophy of education is, in fact, one of the problems of the discipline. Thus the main purpose of Chapter 1 is to show that while philosophers disagree about the kinds of responses that are properly made to questions of knowledge, value, and reality, such questions are important not only for philosophy *qua* philosophy, but also for the development of a philosophy of education that can guide actual educational practices. We therefore introduce a minimum set of technical terms and expose a few "hardened positions" to show students that over time, several major strains of thought have evolved.

The prime objective of Chapter 2 is to demonstrate as clearly as possible how differing philosophic concepts engender differing concepts of education. In keeping with the requirement that the problems selected have contemporary validity, we elected to use here the problem of *whether or not the purpose of education is to train the mind.* We trust that you will find this choice felicitous, because both philosophy as philosophy and education as education have long been concerned with the concept and meaning of intellectual development.

We use Chapter 3 to analyze a broader problem: progressive education. To indicate that educational problems have wide as well as deep philosophic roots, the chapter opens with a reference to the plethora of educational criticisms, especially those asserting that our educational system has shriveled because the destructive germ of "progressive education" has infected so many school systems. To analyze this problem, we use the simple tactic of asking what could be meant by progressive education and suggesting that the operative concept is that of *progress,* which provides the momentum for an analysis of *change* (with metaphysical connotations) and *desirability* (with axiological connotations). This discussion in turn provides an opportunity to illustrate how a philosophy involving an absolute value system yields an approach to education quite different from one involving a relativistic value system.

The examination of progressive education shows that philosophizing about education necessarily moves toward the examination of broad social issues. Because students need and want to think about the larger arena of human conflict, we use Chapter 4 to discuss the crucial problems of academic excellence and school dropouts as the basis for an inquiry into political and social philosophy. Here (as in Chapter 5) we deliberately slide back and forth between analysis and advocacy, without use of technical language or philosophic position, so that students can undertake

their own analyses. More specifically, we attempt to show that one's view of the nature of society conditions one's view of schools and schooling. By way of stark comparison, four conceptions of social organization—society pictured by analogy as a *herd*, a *jungle*, a *marketplace*, and an *organism*—are employed to analyze different beliefs about academic excellence and school dropouts.

Chapter 5 uses the same strategy and tactics to demonstrate that one's views about human nature influence his views about creativity and conformity in school and out. Using analogical comparison and contrast, we offer characterizations of man as *beast*, *noble savage*, *shopper*, and *shaper* —each obviously related to a picture of society as a herd, a jungle, a marketplace, and an organism. The problems of creativity and conformity —really, the nature of human nature—could have been presented by reference to men such as Augustine, Rousseau, Spencer, or Dewey; but this would focus attention upon what other men have said about the general problem of human nature rather than, as we intend, upon the specific social and educational problems of creativity and conformity—problems that can be used as springboards from which students can jump into their own exploration of man's nature.

Although the early chapters were fairly "tightly" written, in Chapters 4 and 5 we have deliberately made free use of analogy and full use of literary style as pedagogical devices. At least from the time Plato offered us his analogy of the cave in *The Republic*, it has been clear that analogical approaches couched in literary style can assist beginning students to grasp abstract concepts when a literal, highly technical description would be unclear to them. It is true that analogical description can suggest a completeness or concreteness that is not in fact present, but this is a weakness only when analogies are viewed as the *last* rather than as the *first* step in understanding. To explain to the beginning student that analogical description is a first step is usually easier than it is to explain that a technical description is not the last word. This difficulty arises because a technical description is "finished" beyond the student's ability to detect flaws. When well done, an analogy is easily grasped and well remembered, even when extensively qualified; by this method, understanding can be successively built up until, at length, the student can cope with the difficult, more precise, technical language of the next step in his quest for understanding.

College students, curious souls that you are, seem to prefer textbook openings that straightforwardly describe the subject matter at hand. This preference does not seem excessively demanding, since any self-respecting discipline should yield a brief but adequate précis of its own scope, sequence, and content. Unhappily, this is not so in the discipline called philosophy of education. It has been said, half in jest and half in truth, that philosophy of education is its own first problem. But in that remark lies the seed of a fuller truth: whatever else philosophy of education may or may not be, it deals with problems—the problems of education, and the problems of philosophy as manifested in education. And sometimes, perhaps with more perversity than skill, the midwifery of philosophy produces solutions to pressing educational problems.

The problems of education are found in the purposes, in the ends and means, of education; and the ends and means of American education are properly found in the social philosophy of democracy rather than in the abstract metaphysics of "philosophy in the grand tradition."

In other words, the current difficulties of education in the United States involve such questions as whether or not the government

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should provide massive federal aid to the schools, public and private, rather than a sterile debate about the "ultimate purpose" of education; the question of how local and regional inequalities in schooling, based on local, regional, or individual poverty, can be remedied, rather than a fruitless examination of whether education "belongs" to the church or the society, to the parent or the child; the question of the consequences for democracy of segregating school children on the sole basis of color or religion, rather than the theological problem of how the segregation of the "true nature" of man into one part ape and one part angel should be reflected in the education of man; a redefinition of the teacher's (and parent's) role in an increasingly complex, urban, technological society, rather than a discussion of whether teachers should join the National Education Association or the American Federation of Teachers. These are among the immediate problems of American education, while thrice-removed abstractions about good and evil, truth and error, or reality and appearance (important as they may be) are not. Until philosophers and educators come to grips with the pressing practical problems of mass education in an open, pluralistic society the philosophy of education will lie as a dead hand upon the schools.

This is *not* to say that philosophers should give up speculation, metaphysical or otherwise, and bone up on programmed instruction, team teaching, the ungraded primary, or the "new mathematics." That would make them technicians, and the ends of education would be lost in a pathless forest of methodology. Nor should teachers give up the attempt to understand and relate theory to practice, for that would make them mere mechanics, perhaps doing whatever they do with sharpened skill but also with dulled understanding of why they do as they do. It *is* to say that the problems of education are just that: the problems of *education*, not the problems of philosophy.

But it is also to say that an attempt to solve educational problems without utilizing the wisdom and the power of philosophy is as inevitably doomed to failure as Darius Green and his flying machine. Practice unguided by theory is aimless and wandering, inconsistent and inefficient (just as theory that is not ultimately translatable into practice is wild and wasteful, confusing and useless). The successful resolution of problems, in education as elsewhere, always requires critical reflection and deliberative action; uncritical reflection is woolgathering or daydreaming, and action that has not been deliberate is habitual (and therefore inappropriate to the solution of problems) or impulsive and accidental.

Clearly, then, education and philosophy are inextricably related in any society, for education is essentially a sociophilosophic enterprise. As a philosophic enterprise education must be based on the root epistemological assumption that it is possible to have knowledge—to know and to learn —and the root axiological assumption that it is better to know than to be ignorant. It is a social enterprise because all societies, however primitive or advanced, deliberately attempt to transmit some collection of facts and

information, skills and abilities, attitudes and values, to succeeding generations in the hope of achieving cultural endurance.

The inseparability of philosophy and education in society is readily apparent in the United States. Philosophically, our nation was founded on and continues to teach and defend the social principle of the consent of the governed; educationally, on the belief that an educated electorate is the necessary condition of a wise electorate, we have deliberately united school and society in terms of this philosophic principle. Where other societies have separated church and learning, except for learning that supports dogma, we separate church and state the better to insure that knowledge will not fall under the censorship of any single or collective dogma. Even when the principle is clear, the policy must be settled in the courts from the question of bussing to school prayer. Periodic consultation of the electorate is not synonymous with the consent of the governed.

The problems of education *are* the problems of philosophy, despite the narrow-minded attempts of some "pure" philosophers to delegate educational problems to the nether categories of philosophic importance, and the anti-intellectual tendencies of some educators (especially administrators) to scorn educational theory on the grounds that they are "on the firing line of educational practice" and have no time for such intellectual niceties as deciding whether they are doing what they could or should be doing, much less determining if what they are doing is being done well.

Education and philosophy are inseparable because the end of education is the end of philosophy—wisdom; and the means of philosophy is the means of education—inquiry, which alone can lead to wisdom. The artificial separation of philosophy and education inhibits inquiry and frustrates wisdom. Only when wisdom becomes the private possession of some group privileged with superhuman avenues of access does philosophy become unnecessary because inquiry is no longer needed. Then what passes as education becomes indoctrination into some special dogma against which no appeal can be made.

Short of such an intellectual catastrophe, philosophy and education cannot be separated, either in theory or in practice, although they can be distinguished. That is why the philosophy of education is a distinct but not separate discipline from either philosophy or education, yet gets *sustenance* from philosophy. It takes its *problems* from education and its *methods* from philosophy, and philosophizing about education requires an understanding not only of education and its problems, but of philosophy as well. Philosophy of education is no more or less a unique discipline than philosophy of science or the science called microbiology.

Well, then, what is philosophy? What is education? What is the relationship of philosophy to education, and just how can philosophy help solve educational problems?

Fair questions, these, and difficult; the answers would not only constitute the desired description of the subject matter at hand but completely

exhaust the discipline called philosophy of education. They are on a par with questions like "What is science?"

PHILOSOPHY

To ask "What is philosophy?" is usually to ask "What is the subject matter of philosophy?" In one sense—the sense of considering what philosophers have taken or used as their subject matter—the answer to that question must be "Anything, everything, and much that is nothing."

Philosophers, wanderers as well as wonderers that they are, are like the cattlemen of the Old West when it comes to fencing in their ranges. Those not so in love with their own forty-acre spread they'd shoot anyone who set foot on it look upon anyone who would define philosophy narrowly as a smelly sheepherder come to fence them in (or out), and an intellectual fence is something to be torn down and destroyed, or at least crept through, for the grass of inquiry may be greener on the other side. Sheriffs, sheepherders, or shootin' irons notwithstanding, most philosophers are not content until they have the right to graze over any academic land. Indeed, they demand the right even if they do not plan to use it.

In another sense, however, the domain of philosophy is neatly categorized, and in this sense the realm of philosophy can be subdivided into manageable proportions.

The academic acreage of philosophy was early increased by its imperialistic power, which claimed title to all of the sciences and held all of the arts in colonial bondage. Like explorers, the first philosophers to venture into a territory have frequently laid claim to the whole region from sea to sea. Territorial expansion, however, was halted first by the secession of the developing areas in the physical sciences (e.g., astronomy and physics) and, more recently, by the declaration of independence of the behavioral sciences (e.g., psychology and sociology). As a result the empire of philosophy has shrunk until some insist it now consists of no more than the analysis of language—a dramatic riches-to-rags history, if true. But land-poor as the domain of philosophy may be, following the emergence of science, it refuses to relinquish its disputed homestead claims to such areas as logic and esthetics, and it still holds clear title to its original grant-holdings: *metaphysics, axiology, and epistemology.*

METAPHYSICS

Metaphysics,[1] or the theory of reality, is the name given to the philosophic attempt to grasp the ultimate or essential characteristic(s) of the

[1] The more generic term is "ontology," which deals with the nature of reality ("what is"), while metaphysics, strictly speaking, deals with the nature of existence (what it means "to be"). In most introductory texts the subtle differences between these two concepts are deliberately ignored and the terms are used interchangeably, which will be the practice herein.

universe in a simple yet all-inclusive manner. It is an attempt, perhaps filled with some bravado but also with much bravery, to answer the ontological question, "What is?" so as to yield a unifying description of, and to give meaning to, reality. In short, the metaphysician tries to describe the sum and substance of what *is*, of what *exists*, of what *is ultimately real*.

Cliché though it may be, the phrase "sum and substance" gives a clue to two aspects of the metaphysical endeavor: the quantitative and the qualitative. Is the sum of reality one, or is it many? And in either case, what is the substance that is one or many?

Philosophy offers three major positions as to the sum of reality considered quantitatively. Some philosophers, while of course admitting that the furniture of the universe—its shoes and ships and sealing wax, its cabbages and kings—is infinite in the number of particulars, nevertheless claim that reality is reducible to but one quality. This is the principle of *monism*. Others, finding neither metaphysical virtue nor physical accuracy in monism, argue that reality consists of two or more irreducible qualities. Those who find themselves able to sort reality into two neat piles, neither more nor less, adhere to the principle of *dualism*; while those who are unable or unwilling to reduce reality to one or two, or n specifiable number of parts, follow the principle of *pluralism*.

As to the substance of reality, philosophy offers four major alternatives. The first is a monism that considers the ultimate quality or constitution of reality to be mental or spiritual, a position identified as *idealism*; the second is also monistic, one that asserts that reality is essentially material or physical, a position common to many forms of *realism*; the third is a dualism that holds that reality combines both the spiritual and the physical, so integrally united that reality is ultimately inseparable into its component aspects, a position common to other forms of realism, most notably *Thomism*;[2] the fourth alternative, refusing either to quantify or to qualify reality, says that it is in a state of constant change and creation and therefore literally as well as philosophically infinite as to gender and number, a position that can be identified as *pragmatism*.

The metaphysical content of philosophy thus deals primarily with the problem of reality, and is an attempt to discover and describe, and sometimes define, what is real and what it means to be real—conclusions that are irreversibly built into an educational system. What society would long cherish, much less support, a school that ignored or denied that society's conception of reality? A theocracy has room for only as many systems as can be reconciled with orthodoxy. In practice, this seldom amounts to very many.

[2] While there are historical and philosophical differences in the positions labeled Thomism and neo-Thomism, scholasticism and neoscholasticism, they will all be used in this text as synonyms referring to the major strain of Roman Catholic thought about philosophy and education.

Axiology,[3] or the theory of value, is that part of philosophy concerned with good and bad, right and wrong, means and ends. It tries to formulate a consistent theory for ethical behavior. Where the metaphysical question was "What *is*?" the axiological question is "What is *good*?" The import of this question—or, rather, of the answer to the question—is that once the good has been identified it is then possible to speak of morality, to use the words and concepts of *ought* and *should*. Thus axiology consists of an analysis of moral beliefs, judgments, and concepts in the creation or discovery of a theory of value.

Ethical positions in philosophy, or axiologies, appear and disappear at least as frequently, and as confusedly, as French political parties, but this is the fault of philosophers and Frenchmen rather than philosophy and France. Even so, just as Frenchmen have managed to maintain some fundamental political positions throughout the several republics, so too have philosophers been able to stabilize some basic axiological positions throughout philosophic upheavals. The two major approaches to axiology turn on two different answers to the question "Are values independent of, or dependent upon, mankind?" Those who reply that values are fundamentally independent of man and society, although they do indeed obligate man and society, believe in a generic theory of value called *objectivism*. Those whose responses affirm the complete dependence of values upon man and his works, and deny that values can exist independently of humanity, believe in a generic theory of value called *subjectivism*.*

To say that objectivism and subjectivism are generic is only to say, in this instance, that all theories of value—as numerous and different as they may be—can be put in one of these two basic axiological categories. Of the multiple approaches to ethics four demand identification here; two are objective (the *intuitive* and *rational* theories of value), and two are subjective (the *naturalistic* and *emotive* theories of value).

The intuitive theory of value, which is usually associated with idealism and some variants of realism, holds that while it may be difficult if not impossible to define an ultimate set of values (and for this reason the theory is sometimes referred to as "the indefinability theory of value"), an ultimate and absolute[4] set of values nevertheless does exist in the

[3] Historically a more common term has been "ethics" or "morals," but in recent years "axiology"—from the Greek words *axios*, referring to value, and *logos*, referring to theory—has been increasingly used in philosophic dialogue.

* Here care must be taken not to confuse the common-sense and psychological meanings with the philosophic. Ordinary usage equates intuitive with subjective, and scientific naturalism links objects and objective. In philosophy objectivism refers to values given existence fixed and real beyond human experience and subjectivism means values shaped within the human experience.

[4] By "absolute" is meant whatever is not dependent upon the relative circumstances of time, place, or man; or, similarly, whatever refers to all men at all times in all places.

objective order of things. These values are to be discovered by intuition, an intuition that is possible because there is a fixed moral order, antecedent to and independent of man and his wants and needs, which has ontological existence in the realm of ultimate reality. Put more directly, ethical objectivism affirms that values exist as properties of objects or inhere in the relationship between objects, and that the validity of these objective values does not in any respect depend on the existence or behavior of mankind. Still in all, once man discovers and recognizes these values by the process of intuition, he is obligated to regulate his individual and social behavior in accord with these moral prescriptions.[5]

The rational theory of value, which is associated with Thomistic varieties of realism, also holds that values are objective and ultimately independent of man. The discovery of value, however, comes as the result of human reason and supernatural revelation rather than human intuition, and the compelling sanction of such values is enhanced by the fact that man will do right when he knows the right (by reason) as well as by the fact that only an evil or ignorant man would act contrary to the will of God as revealed by Him. According to this view, then, by appeal to his reason or his God, man can discover the ultimate, objective, absolute values that should direct his behavior.

Naturalistic theories of value, quite in opposition to intuitionism or rationalism, deny that we find values ready-made in the natural or supernatural order of things. They are neither "out there" embedded in nature nor orbiting "beyond." Since values do not pre-exist in the cosmos, independent of the interests and efforts of men, it is illogical to speak of "discovering" values—for how can one discover something that does not yet exist? The needle did not come with the haystack, and only a fool or a philosopher would search for that which does not exist. Values, therefore, are not intuited in a flash of insight, or revealed in a transcendental moment, or even discovered in a fit of pure reason, but created by man out of his experienced needs and desires. They are human artifacts, biosocial creations invented and used and tested by individuals and societies to serve the purpose of guiding human behavior. They are every bit as "natural" as language, the wheel, or a painting. A naturalistic approach to axiology, generally associated with pragmatism and the more empirical variants of realism, thus involves an instrumental theory of value in which judgments of value are not absolute and infallible but relative[6] and

[5] Note that "prescription," literally "pre-scribe," indicates something that has been set down or written in advance and is designed to influence or control subsequent action. This linguistic clue provides insight into those philosophic positions that hold that the good things of life, like the true things in life, precede mankind and therefore could not have been created by man and, consequently, cannot be dependent upon or changed by man. The full implication of this insight goes deep into philosophic as well as theologic thought and comes out in moral pronouncements for all.

[6] In philosophic dialogue "relative" is used as the antonym of "absolute." By "rela-

contingent. They are among the humanly created tools with which man hopes to build his life, and they must constantly be tested and reforged in the matrix of human experience. Here it is easily seen that naturalistic theories of value are generically subjective in nature; but this does not mean that such theories assert that values are automatically equivalent to any individual subject's whim or will or interest. It does mean, however, that values can only grow out of human wants and needs when these are critically examined, and hence relative to and dependent upon the human condition.

Where the intuitive, rational, and instrumental theories of value accord cognitive status to values (i.e., value propositions can be shown to be true or false), the emotive theory of value insists that moral and ethical concepts are not judgments of fact but merely expressions of emotions or attitudes. Values thus consist of no more than unverifiable opinion, which can have no cognitive coercive power. It is important to realize that the emotivist does not deny the existence of values, for he notes that valuing is an important part of the human act, but he views the human drama as an axiological tragicomedy. Concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, which are taken so seriously, can never be more than the emotional judgment or conviction of an individual or group—and that is the tragedy of it. But it is comical too, and even paradoxical, for being noncognitive, values cannot carry any coercion greater than that sanctioned by individual or group opinion—and there is no appeal from an emotional conviction. Thus our values are hopelessly, and only, subjective, reflecting a sociopsychological order rather than a cosmic moral order.

The axiological aspect of philosophy, then, is an attempt to deal with the good and the bad, the right and the wrong, and to mold these concepts into ethical and moral patterns to guide human and social behavior—patterns that effect and affect all social institutions, most particularly education.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, is that segment of the philosophic quest that seeks to identify the ground and nature of truth and knowledge, and perhaps this is the most important part of philosophy for educators—for surely the teacher's stock-in-trade can be nothing other than knowledge.[7]

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tive" is meant what has meaning only in reference to specifiable sets of time, place, and human conditions; or, similarly, what is contingent and dependent upon temporal, spatial, and social frames of reference and is subject to change as these frames of reference vary.

[7] Either the possession of knowledge about a body of subject matter, such as history or biology (which is an epistemological *product*), or the possession of the knowledge about how to produce knowledge, such as teaching or research (which is an epistemological *process*). These are what the teacher sells to a board of education when a contract is signed.

Where the metaphysical question is "What *is*?" and the axiological question is "What is *good*?," the epistemological question—in a suspicious sort of way—is "How do you *know*?" This is a criterial demand, a demand for proof, a request for the explication of the criteria that justify the assertion of a claim to know. If to know means to have measured, what can be known without a standard? Thus the epistemological question inquires not only into *what* we know (the product) but into *how* we came to know (the process). The epistemologian is a very inquisitive fellow. He wants to know *what* is known, *when* is it known, *who* knows or can know, and most importantly, *how* we know. He is a surveyor of the cognitive wilderness.

These questions, however, are preceded by a logical first question, "*Can* we know?" The answers to this question provide us with the three categories used to identify epistemological positions.

The first position answers "Yes, of course we can and do know—and what is more, we are *certain*." This is the response of *dogmatism*,[8] an epistemological position that asserts that in order to know anything at all we must first have some knowledge that meets two criteria: it must be certain, not open to any doubt, and it must be uninferred. A knowledge claim that is certain and uninferred (not dependent upon a prior knowledge claim) can be used as a springboard from which to deduce or discover other knowledge that is not self-evidently true, as are the certain and
12 uninferred truths. The dogmatist, having laid down these criteria, then asserts that we do in fact have some certain and uninferred propositions (e.g., a = a, or, a whole is larger than a part), and thus responds to the question "Can we know?" with an assured affirmative: we can, we do, we must know something for sure and certain. This surveyor works with fixed and permanent markers put there for his use.

The second answer to the question is that given by *skepticism*, a response that denies the possibility of having any knowledge at all, thus casting epistemology, and mankind, adrift in a sea of uncertainty and opinion. The skeptic does agree with the dogmatist that, in order to have knowledge, one must first have some certain and uninferred premises; but where the dogmatist claims to have such self-evident premises the skeptic denies their existence. Hence the skeptic's answer to the question is "No, we do not know nor can we know." Ultimately, the skeptic ends by saying to the end of his days "Man knows not and knows not that he knows not."[9] As surveyor the skeptic can trust no marker absolutely,

[8] This term has come to have unsavory connotations in everyday language that it does not have in philosophic terminology. Here the meaning, or "dogma," is that dubious knowledge is not truly knowledge, for we can have some kinds of knowledge about which there is no doubt—certain knowledge. The dogmatist insists that all knowledge, to be knowledge, must be certain. Though there may be very little, what there is he bets his life upon.

[9] This variant of skepticism of course dies by its own hand, as the following illustrates: When the skeptic says we cannot know anything, because we lack certain

not even his own. Even as he sets them down they begin to sink from sight.

The third response is "Yes, we can know—but we can never have the kind of certain knowledge the dogmatist requires and says is possible." This is *fallibilism*, an epistemological point of view that rejects out of hand the criterion demanding the availability of certain and uninferred premises before knowledge can be said to exist. When he asserts that the possession of certain knowledge is improbable if not impossible, and yet at the same time asserts that we do have reliable knowledge, the fallibilist clearly must be satisfied with knowledge claims that can never be 100 per cent certain. Nothing can be verified beyond any possibility of doubt including his own statement. Here is the true Doubting Thomas. And he is content with this type of probabilistic knowledge, for he is *convinced* that we deal always with possibilities and probabilities and never with certainties. That is, he is convinced. He bets on it. But he is no more *sure* of it as a certainty than a man can be that his horse will win the race, yet he may bet a fortune on it. The fallibilistic response, therefore, is that philosophy must emulate science in posture and learn to be content with knowledge that is open to change, rather than final; relative, rather than absolute; probable, rather than certain. Working from old and worn markers this surveyor suspects the ground may have shifted, so he checks and rechecks and even then remains tentative.

Contemporary philosophers of all persuasions, with the exception of some existentialists, thus agree that we can know. But how? The idealist, building on a monistic metaphysic that holds that all reality is ultimately spiritual or mental, finds many roads to knowledge, but the best and surest, he believes, is to rely on that part of human nature that is attuned to divine nature: the mind. The mind is like a tuning fork that will pick up vibrations from other forks or impart vibrations to them when both have the same pitch or some harmonic. For the idealist then, since knowledge consists of ideas and since ideas are products of the mind, knowledge is a product of mind—a product resulting from the mental processes of intuition and reasoning. Further, since intuition—if not reason—can yield certain knowledge, the idealist is an epistemological dogmatist. His markers may be covered up for a time, hard to locate, almost unreadable because of wear; nevertheless, he knows they are there somewhere, and he is sure he will recognize them when he finds them.

So too is the realist, or at least if he belongs to one of those species of realism that are often called classical realism.[10] But where the idealist calls

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and uninferred premises, he is in fact asserting that we *do* know something—namely, we know that we cannot know. Thus he contradicts his original position. Skepticism is therefore logically untenable in terms of its own premises, and it must be concluded that some kind of knowledge is indeed possible.

[10] Even on the basis of these few pages it is evident that realism as a "school" consists more of a series of philosophic splinter groups than a central body with a near-unanimous position. Still, from this bewildering variety—Aristotelian realism,

on the tuning fork of intuition as the sure path to certain knowledge and absolute truth, the classical realist relies primarily on the rational faculties of mind to crack the code of experience and decipher the truth. When filled with reports of observation, language holds truth in coded form that reason can unravel. Given the objective ontological world of the classical realist, and given his theories of mind and perception, our knowledge of the external world comes to us best through reasoning about reports of observations. Even though either observations or reports or both may from time to time deceive us, we can always rely on our reason—and on that basis the classical realist is secure in the belief that certain knowledge and absolute truth exist, and human reason is capable of finding and capturing them. Implied in this is an order imminent or implanted in nature that reason can discover. If there were no meaning in the garbled message experience records there could be no knowledge.

Insofar as the Thomist is in the mainstream of classical realism, his positions are similar. In addition, however, the Thomist puts his faith in revelation as well as reason, for while the mind by its own processes may acquire knowledge and reach truth, knowledge and truth may also be given through revelation to the mind. There is truth finding and truth giving, and the wise man takes advantage of both what he digs up and what he is told. The Thomist, as are other kinds of classical realists, is an epistemological dogmatist.

14 Not so, however, with those branches of realism known as modern realism, with pragmatism, or with logical empiricism—strictly naturalistic philosophies all—which take the fallibilist thesis that knowledge is ever contingent upon circumstance and truth is relative to its conditions. For these naturalists intuition and revelation are ruled out as reliable sources of knowledge on the ground that neither is open to public, repeatable, empirically confirmable inspection. Once having eliminated these as reputable fonts of knowledge, since they do not meet the criterion of public verification, the naturalist is left with ordinary human experience, plus his ability to reflect and reason on that experience, as the sole source of knowledge and truth. But experience is notoriously fickle and human reason is known to err; thus the naturalist is and must be an epistemological fallibilist.

Epistemology, then, is that task of philosophy that involves the identification and examination of criteria of knowledge and truth, criteria that would sufficiently warrant asserting "This we know" or "This is true"—a task that is assuredly full of rich meaning for education since the

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classical realism, critical realism, modern realism, neorealism, presentative realism, representative realism, scholastic realism, etc.—there is the common belief that the external world has ontological reality, and can be known, that unites them. For pedagogical purposes herein, those varieties that incorporate conceptions of supernaturalism and absolutism will be called "classical realism," while those that emphasize naturalism and relativism will be called "modern realism."

minimal, if not the maximal, goals of education certainly include the acquisition of knowledge and the pursuit of truth. *What* you have when you say you know, *when* you have earned the right to say it, and *how* you went about getting it are all key questions in epistemology and in education.

SUMMARY

Realizing that there are probably as many definitions of philosophy as there are philosophers, it is still accurate to note that the three areas of interest that have been characterized by intense philosophic interest are metaphysics, axiology, and epistemology. To say this does not, however, exhaust the meaning or content of philosophy, nor does it make clear the process of philosophizing; but it is sufficient for the purpose of suggesting the general nature of the subject matter called philosophy.

EDUCATION

The significance of philosophy in the solution of educational problems becomes apparent when we try to define education—such a definition largely depends upon some set of prior philosophic convictions about nature and human nature, man and society. The problem, of course, is that since there is a multiplicity of philosophic viewpoints there is no one clear, concise, agreed-upon definition of education. Some of the definitions most widely agreed upon have the greatest number of meanings, and possibly the least meaning as a consequence.

For example, is education the process of drawing out of children ideas that lie implicitly imbedded in their minds? Is it the process of developing abilities that are innately part of everyone's human nature? Is it the process of activating the brain so as to acquire, record, and store organized bodies of fact and value? Is it the process of writing and rewriting social experience on the *tabula rasa* of the individual? Is it the process of raising children to adjust to and live in a certain kind of society—be it the society of man, or of God, or both?

These questions, each of which implies somewhat differing conceptions of education, suggest three conclusions: first, education cannot be all of these things, for some of them are contradictory and thus cannot coexist with each other to form an adequate definition; second, whatever else education may or may not be, it is evidently a process, for this is a concept common to each of the alternatives; and third, a more careful inspection of these alternative definitions reveals at least two basic and apparently fundamentally different approaches to the process of educating. Let us briefly examine this dichotomy, one side of which views education as the process of drawing out and building upon internal abilities dormant in children, while the other sees education as the process of assimilating

information external to the child [11] and injecting it into him. Even in Periclean Greece these opposites found expression in the Socratic dialogues as contrasted against Aristotelian dialecticism.

EDUCATION AS MANIFESTATION

If we assume that an original and integral part of human nature is the possession of some set of abilities, abilities that are as common in kind to every man as is the ability to see and hear, but that vary in degree with different men as the senses do, education can be defined as the process of identifying and developing these primal abilities. Education is thus the process of making manifest what is latent in each child. Physically the normal child need not be bright to see, but that he looks yet does not see indicates how much observation depends upon training.

Those who adhere to this view believe that education can be described by analogy to the growth and development of flowers, in which the latent potentialities of the seed bloom into the manifested splendor of the mature flower. Analogically, the child is the seed in which as-yet-unrealized potentials lie dormant; the teacher is the gardener whose tender, loving care will help unfold these hidden promises; and education is the teaching-gardening process by which these unseen capacities will become visible through the judicious choice and application of the proper chemical fertilizers.*

EDUCATION AS ACQUISITION

Without denying that every human has some set of inherent potentialities, and that the child is father to the man, but disbelieving that the child carries within him the seeds of all that the man is or can become, another approach to education places more emphasis on the ability of man to acquire information by inquiry into the nature of the external world. Here inquiry is more a process of *taking in* what exists outside the learner, rather than a process of bringing out what exists internally in him. Consequently, education becomes the process of passing on to him the conclusions of inquiry he could not, or need not, conduct himself.

According to this view the child being educated can be likened to a sponge, which soaks up only those parts of the external environment to which it is exposed. While the natural absorptive powers of the child-

[11] In his highly informative *Introduction to American Higher Education* (Stanford University, 1957, mimeographed), W. H. Cowley describes an interesting etymological aspect of the problem. On tracing the ancestry of the English word "education" Cowley discovered that Latinists are not agreed whether *educere* (the process of drawing out or leading from) or *educare* (the process of rearing or raising) is the legitimate linguistic parent. While the strongest case seems to favor *educare* it is still worthwhile noting that neither linguistic heritage nor usage can offer a criterion for the final solution of the problem; that is a philosophic responsibility.

* For the examination of several such views in historical and practical perspective see Charles J. Brauner, *American Educational Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964).

sponge may be limited by its internal constitution, the kind and amount of material taken in depends not so much on internal as on external conditions. Thus the sponge may assimilate sour wine equally well as pure water, and the child may assimilate trivial fact or fiction as well as more nourishing elixir. The child-sponge not only receives but retains, and though there is always some natural drainage (depending on the quality of the sponge) and evaporation (depending on the climate) to be expected, the child can discharge most of the absorbed material, in slightly altered condition, when squeezed by the teacher. The brain of the child, like the sponge, never completely dries out, for it exists in a world that is constantly spraying it with drops—if not waves—of information.

EDUCATION AS TRANSACTION

Freely admitting that man by nature has certain internal abilities and frankly acknowledging that the nurture of man involves the acquisition of facts about the external world, but moving beyond definitions of education as the manifestation of the given or the acquisition of what must be taken, a third view sees education as a transaction—the process of give *and* take—between man and his environment. It is a process in which and by which man develops or creates the skills needed to modify and improve his human and environing conditions, as well as the formation of the attitudes or dispositions that guide his efforts in this reconstruction of human as well as physical nature.

According to this view, classroom education can be described by analogy to the stone sculpture done by the Eskimos of Baffin Bay. The artist and his material "work together" to create a shape that is organically suited to the nature of the material and expressively suited to the abilities of the artist. Eskimo sculpturing, as compared to the process of sculpturing in the classical tradition, is dynamic and interactive rather than static and directive. Where the classical sculptor fashions his material into the shape determined by a precast mold, plan, or concept, the Eskimo artist carries on a dialogue with the stone to find what there is in each piece consistent with his own ability as a sculptor to release. In Canada they tell of an old Eskimo commissioned to do a reclining polar bear who brought back a finely carved killer whale. When asked why he did not produce what the client had ordered his reply was that he had asked the stone if it could be a polar bear and the stone had answered no. When he asked the stone what it could be it had answered either a killer whale or a fat, female brown seal. Then he asked himself which of the two he could best release and he chose the whale. No piece can be a duplicate of any other piece. There can be no fixed a priori idea mercilessly imposed. So must it be in teaching.

Given both the plasticity and resistance of human nature, the teacher-artist works both on and with his material. Insofar as the material will

yield to the talents of the sculptor, and insofar as the craftsman understands the nature and limits of his media and material, the cooperative teaching-sculpting process results in the transformation of human material from something dull and rough into something smooth and polished.[12]

Each of these three definitions—education as the teasing out of internal powers so as to unfold and develop all the potentials of the child, education as the injection of information about the external universe so as to enable the student to understand and control that world, or education as transaction between man and environment so as to improve his relationships with human and environing conditions—is based on some conception of the nature of man and his universe.

If man is the special, spiritual creation of God living in His universe and enjoying earthly tenure at His pleasure, then he should be educated as such; if man is purely a biological creature, a complex nervous system lacking an inorganic mind and an immortal soul, and living in a strictly materialistic universe, then he should be educated in another way; or if man is a biosocial animal living in a given natural world through means of a received but not unalterable social order, a world in which all parts are inextricably related and of which he is an integral part, then he should be educated in yet another way. If man's human nature is a fixed universal commodity shared by all men, then the education men receive should also be common and fixed; but if the human nature of men differs with their biological and social histories, then their education should be less common and more individualized, less fixed and more flexible. If man is essentially or intrinsically good then his interests, purposes, and activities are likely to tend to the good and his education can safely allow this goodness to emerge; but if man is initially bad, as legislated by the doctrine of original sin, then his education should be used to weed out the evil sprouts of this bad seed which is the common inheritance of all men as part of the patrimony of their human nature. Further, he must be trained to be good and shown how to suppress the bad in him.

Thus it would be strange indeed to define education as the unfolding of the latent powers of mind unless one first postulated that mind is the common and unique possession of men—common in that all men have a mind, and unique in that man alone possesses this invaluable gift—and that whatever would emerge from unfolding it would be good and beautiful, not bad and ugly. But if we agree with the idealist that the entire universe is ultimately mental in composition, then it is only consistent to argue that the great, ineffable Mind of the universe is reflected in the

[12] Israel Scheffler has offered a penetrating analysis of educational metaphors, such as the flower analogy and the sculpture analogy, in *The Language of Education* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas Co., 1960), pp. 47–59.

mind of man—and from that what other conclusion should we reach but that the prime, if not the only true, purpose of education is to develop and train the mind so that it is in harmony with the cosmic concert?

It would be equally strange to define education as the acquisition of information about the external world if one did not first posit the physical reality of that world as well as the ability of man to learn and teach about it. Hence if we agree with the realist that matter is *not* reducible to mind, but that mind—and all else that exists—is in reality ultimately material, then it makes sense to argue that the *differentia* of man is his material brain and it is this and not some im- or nonmaterial mind that is to be educated. Though knowledge may exist only in human brains, the objects of knowledge exist apart from man. And it is about these objects that we must teach.

Again, it would also be strange indeed to define education as one kind or quality of interaction between man and his environment unless one first asserted that man and his environment are naturally related, that man is inseparable from nature. Thus if we agree with the pragmatist that the reduction of reality to mind or matter, *or* the division of reality into spirit *and* matter, is but a sophistry since the only reality we do or can experience is much more complex and rich than such a monism or dualism suggests, then it is reasonable to insist that human nature is a many-splendored thing and that education cannot be restricted to training the muscles of the mind or organizing the cells of the brain but must involve "the whole child" in terms of his individual and social nature. Teaching must be active and learning organic. There must be interaction between man and his environment so that children influence events and events change students before learning has taken place.

So we begin to see that an inquiry into the nature of human nature, the attempt to answer the question, "What is man?" so that we may formulate a proper definition of education, comes under the primary jurisdiction of philosophy. But not exclusively so, for some philosophic judgments about the nature of man have been appealed to the court of science where they have been overturned. Even so, science is not a supreme court with jurisdiction over all aspects of what shall be understood as human nature, for much of the litigation lies beyond the competence of the sciences—physical, biological, or psychological—to judge. Further, at least some philosophers refuse to submit to the authority of science and the scientific method, and whenever empirical science seems to claim jurisdiction over a larger area (e.g., the genesis of man in terms of the theory of evolution) nonempirical philosophers cry for a change of venue on the ground that their views cannot receive a fair hearing before a court where scientific evidence alone is admissible. However scholars may behave, scholarship does not look to winning its case in a Kangaroo court.

The pertinence of philosophy to education is therefore readily apparent even when we try to define education, for on closer inspection we see

that an answer to the question "What is education?" must await an answer to the question "What is man?"—and that question, in turn, awaits an answer to the question "What is reality?" Once given an ontological position it is possible to comment on the nature of human nature, and from these philosophic beginnings it becomes possible to develop a definition of education that successfully unites philosophic commitment with educational practice, to give the latter a basis in thought and the former an outlet in action. This, then, is the crucial task of educational philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

To outline the scope of philosophy *and* education, as we have done, is not to define philosophy *of* education. It is merely the first step; but it is a long stride forward, for it illustrates that philosophy and education walk hand in hand and, speaking at least of the latter, education would soon be as lost as a blind man without his seeing-eye dog if it were parted from philosophy. In this relationship philosophy and education are mutually reconstructive; they give to and take from each other, in the ebb and flow of thought and action; they are means to one another, and ends; they are process and product. It is out of this fusion of reflective thought and practical action that philosophy *of* education can be defined.

PHILOSOPHY AS PROCESS

Normally when we think of philosophy we think of a finished product, a completed (if not complete) system of thought. While this is proper enough, even a simple sense of logic suggests that an achieved end has had its antecedent means. The product that we call "a philosophy" is surely the issue of some process. This process—the intellectual means by which the product of philosophy is realized—is of course *philosophizing*. Yet to say that philosophy is the result of philosophizing is not to say very much until the distinction between process and product in philosophy is described.

Complicated as the activity of philosophizing is, to serve pedagogical purposes we can identify four distinct but related aspects of the process: the analytic, the evaluative, the speculative, and the integrative.

The analytic aspect of philosophizing involves such activities as identifying and examining the assumptions and criteria that guide behavior (and especially choice-making behavior, for it is the choices we make that in effect regulate our more active behaviors). The evaluative aspect, which implies not only the act of criticism but the setting forth of criteria by which we criticize, is the process of assessing or judging actions and of defending the criteria by which judgments are made. The speculative aspect of philosophizing—the activity laymen usually associate with phi-

losophy and often erroneously view as the mere spinning of intellectually lightweight webs out of nothingness—consists of the generation of new hypotheses, the genesis of new alternatives for conduct, on the bases of prior analyses, evaluations, and integrations. And finally, the integrative aspect is constructive in the sense of putting together or relating previously disparate criteria or knowledge or action (as did Newton in science when he united the previously separate fields of astronomy and mechanics) so as to constitute a new or refurbished whole. In this sense it can be said that the process of philosophizing constitutes the dynamic for intellectual progress. It is to thought what explosion is to the internal combustion engine—the critical event upon which the whole machinery depends.

In a larger sense, however, it can fairly be said that philosophizing is the process of analysis, if, by analysis, is meant the attempt to grasp the meaning of a word, an idea, a concept, an experience; it is the process of posing meaningful questions and seeking intelligent responses to those questions—questions that, as we have seen, deal primarily with the nature of reality, the criteria of knowledge, and problems of value.

PHILOSOPHY AS PRODUCT

Just as every process has its product, philosophic activity too produces its result. Viewing philosophizing as the activity of analysis, the product, hopefully, is understanding: the clarification of words, ideas, concepts, and experience so that instead of confusing and mystifying us they serve us instead as tools for even further inquiries. As elsewhere, understanding in philosophy begins with the making of ever more subtle distinctions. Viewing philosophizing as the putting of questions and the proposing of answers, the product of philosophy as we usually think of it—philosophy with a capital "P"—is a body of thought that is internally consistent and is composed of the responses made to questions raised in the process of philosophizing. On first view it seems to be answers, positions, conclusions, final summations, and finished plans.

When philosophy is viewed this way, and because philosophers often make different responses even though the questions they ask may be identical, the products come to be labeled according to the *kinds* of answers given; thus we see the evolution of "schools of philosophy" such as idealism, realism, pragmatism, positivism, existentialism, etc., each striving to retain internal consistency, yet each remaining inconsistent with the other.[13] To see behind to plans offered, the stands taken, the conclusions proffered and to sense the fascinating interplay of various and varying perspectives is to see beneath the surface of philosophy into its depths.

[13] Philosophers not only disagree on the answers, but also on the questions to be asked. Still there is sufficient harmony, in Western civilization, as to which questions are important (those questions of ontology, axiology, and epistemology) to yield bodies of thought that are not each *sui generis* and therefore incomparable.

That education is a process when "education" refers to the act of teaching or the task of learning receives common consent from all, though there is much dissent as to the specific nature of the process of educating. Nevertheless, it is agreed that education can be writ large or small. Writ large, education is the sum of the sociocultural press on an individual: what he learns and is taught in the home, church, club, pool-room, street corner, or theater as well as the school. Writ smaller, it is what is done to him in the total school situation; and writ even smaller yet, it is what happens in the formal classroom. Smaller still, it attaches to liberal, general, special technical, and professional education.

Short of being synonymous with "living," the fullest meaning of education can only be synonymous with enculturation: the process of learning about the culture in which the child is born, lives, and dies. A narrower meaning, one subsumed within the total process of enculturation, is the organized attempt of any society to socialize the child—not only to teach him the *mores* of the culture but to persuade him to accept them and abide by them. The school is the instrument of this narrower meaning of education and, notwithstanding the rich variety of educational theories and philosophies, the process of education on this level at least involves the transmission of facts and values that the society now holds dear, *as well as* the creation of new ones. Education is at least the handing down of "established fact and sanctioned value"; but it also involves the development of intellectual and physical abilities, the examination and acceptance of old, or the experimentation with the adoption of new, values and attitudes.

Thus education is, in full, the process of enculturation—of introducing the educand, be he babe or adult, to the culture in which he exists and to the socially developed and endorsed methods of living and working in that society. Less fully, education is the process of socialization: introducing the child to society, attempting to persuade him to accept and defend, perpetuate and extend, the culture that has taken the pains to nurture and nourish him. And throughout all of this, education is the process of preparing the child for present and future living in his culture by providing him with the tools and techniques necessary to this end. It is the chief means of what anthropologists call "the passage to manhood."

The definition of educational processes in social and cultural terms does not exclude the individual, for society is by fact and definition a group of individuals who have learned to live and work and play together. "Culture" is an abstract word used to describe those ways that a people have learned (the "how" of it) and the products of those ways of living (the "what" of it). At bottom and at top is the individual, not the institutions, the artifacts, the governments, or the beliefs. For without the individual neither human culture nor society would exist; that is why education

does, as it must, focus directly on the individual and only indirectly, mirrored through him, on society and culture.

Education, however broadly or narrowly conceived, therefore necessarily involves three stages of consideration: the biological, which yields the human animal and in some part determines the possible limits of the educative process; the psychological, which builds on the biological and differentiates out the individual; and the sociological, which takes in the biological "given" and reflects back an image of self to the psychological, thus facing man with a mirror by which to groom himself.

Consequently the product of education, while it can be discussed in terms of individuals, is not merely a collection of individuals who are literate in one degree or another. Surely that is a laudable goal, and one of the meaningful products of an educational process, but in a larger sense the product of education must be expressed in social and cultural terms as well. The social and cultural products are the fruit by which educational processes are judged. With this view it is not too much to say that the product of education is the creation or preparation of individuals by which and through which society renews, changes, improves, and extends itself. Thus does education become inextricably linked with a concept of progress, a concept of manhood.

If philosophy *and* education are both process and product, and if philosophy *of* education in some way articulates philosophic thought with educational action, it takes no great logician to conclude that philosophy of education, too, is meaningfully defined in terms of process and product.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AS PROCESS

Taken as process, philosophy of education is the activity of clarifying the terms, thoughts, and principles that guide education, as well as the problems that inhibit education. It is a process that proposes ends, or goals, for education and suggests means to those ends.

Referring to the four functions of philosophy mentioned earlier—the analytic, the evaluative, the speculative, and the integrative—the process of philosophizing about education is well described within these categories.

The analytic function involves locating and examining the assumptions, beliefs, commitments, and criteria that guide (or are proposed as guides for) educational policies and practices. Normally this activity includes an inspection of these criteria, policies, and practices for consistency and meaning.

By way of illustration, consider the educational practice of "grading on a curve." On analysis this practice, which stems from an educational policy concerning pupil evaluation, is based on some set of assumptions (statistical as well as philosophical) about the definition and distribution of ability in the population at large and the classroom sample in particular.

Is it an ontological fact, for example, that the assumed range of abilities in the universe constituted by the student population is so distributed as to match the statistically famous bell-shaped curve? If this is a valid assumption, then what assurance do we have that any given class sample actually matches or mirrors that universal frequency distribution—or is this uncritically accepted as self-evident?

Even were grading on a curve statistically defensible, is it philosophically defensible? What does grading on a curve assume about the nature of human nature, about the definition, distribution, and measurement of ability and achievement? At first glance these may seem strictly questions of fact, but analysis reveals that they are primarily philosophic in nature.

The evaluative function moves beyond analysis, for it involves not only identifying and examining the criteria that guide policy and practice in education, but also assessing and judging such policies and practices in terms of their underlying, supporting criteria. This evaluation is most frequently made through the use of the philosophic category of axiology and concepts of value—e.g., value as intrinsic and extrinsic, as subjective or objective, as relative or absolute, as instrumental or terminal.

To illustrate the evaluative function of philosophy of education, consider the educational policy often known as the "emergent curriculum," a policy that leads to the educational practice of teacher-pupil planning. On analysis we see that, underlying this policy and the practice it suggests, is an assumption that learning results from pupil interest and activity. But there are other approaches to learning, many of which assert that while learning is a result of pupil effort it need not be anteceded by pupil interest. Here we have a critical conflict resulting in a practical pedagogical problem—should we provoke effort even in the absence of interest, or should we evoke effort through stimulation of interest?

In order to reach educational policies and practices considered appropriate we resort to the philosophic activity of evaluating the underlying assumptions that analysis has revealed; and not infrequently we evaluate these assumptions, policies, and practices in the light of their consistency with an over-all philosophic position we find congenial to ourselves. Hence, given a theory of man that holds that the child by his very nature is curious, we might well favor the "interest-effort-learning" position and, in so doing, reject the strict teacher-directed implementation of the curriculum in favor of a teacher-pupil planning approach to the implementation of the curriculum. On the other hand, given a theory of human nature holding that children are naturally lazy or recalcitrant, we might favor the "forced-effort-then-learning" position that teacher-pupil planning is inefficient and ineffective since what is required is a strong, knowledgeable teacher directing the learning activities of weak, uninformed students.

The speculative function of philosophy of education is normally based on the analysis, evaluation, and previous synthesis of existing elements, but it also means building on these, or recombining these and other things,

in order to create new hypotheses and identify new alternatives for use in education. This involves the "What if . . . ?" "Why not . . . ?" and "How about . . . ?" kinds of activity by which educational progress is born. Speculation of this nature is not wild and uncontrolled, conducted in the absence of existing fact or value; instead, speculation well done is rigorous and achieved within some meticulously built frame of reference. Lawrence Thomas's penetrating dictum "There is no view without a point of view" clearly indicates that one cannot speculate in a vacuum, that one cannot speculate about nothing with nothing. Rather, one speculates within *some* frame of reference (perhaps taken only for purposes of speculation), on some problem or some subject matter, and with some intellectual tools. Speculation is thus a disciplined, if not dogmatized, activity; if it involves creative flights of fancy, as well it may, the flight takes off from some base somewhere, is controlled by someone using some flight instruments, and eventually returns to land somewhere. Whatever stays up in the air, whatever cannot be brought down to the firm level of meaning and translated into operational practices, is not truly speculation: it is mere fanciful thinking without prospect or promise.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AS PRODUCT

The integrative function builds on the analyses made and the judgments reached so as to unite and combine these preferred educational policies and practices into a logical, consistent, coherent whole—what is often called *a* philosophy of education. Here, by way of illustration, we bring together our beliefs about human nature, about society, about learning, about subject matter, about a myriad of philosophic and educational judgments and create "the big picture" (or more appropriately, "the big window"—the intellectual window through which we view education). The result of this activity resides in the various "schools" of educational philosophy, although it should by no means be thought that the highly formalized and well-known "schools" are the only possible integrations. It is eminently possible, and perhaps highly desirable, for each educator to build his own consistent, coherent, functional philosophy of education to guide his educational activities.

The integrative function of philosophy of education, then, is the unifying and harmonizing of educational beliefs that have been arrived at through the analysis and evaluation of many possibilities. The word "unifying" correctly denotes an additive process; but the integrative function, as the word "harmonizing" connotes, suggests something more than mere addition—it suggests the polishing, reworking and fitting together of the various elements of one's philosophy of education so as to integrate them into a consistent, mutually supporting set of propositions that compose a body of thought with no rough edges to tear the fabric of educational policy and leave educational practices intellectually worn and threadbare.

Philosophy of education, then, is that discipline, or that mode of thought, that provides educators with a perspective. Indeed, *it is itself* a perspective, for a philosophy of education is a way of looking at, thinking about, and acting in educational contexts.

As noted at the opening of this chapter, one could fairly argue that philosophy of education is its own first problem; yet at the same time, one can also argue—and demonstrate—that the first problems of education ("Shall we educate?" "Why and how?") are themselves philosophical and cannot be answered without drawing upon, or creating, a philosophy of education.

And the best, really the only, way to develop this kind of perspective is to grapple with the problems of education—a struggle immeasurably enhanced in your favor when you use the intellectual weaponry of philosophy to help you overcome the grip of ignorance, which is the father of most educational problems. In teaching, as in other deeply human acts, a man can be his own worst enemy. The man who cannot rise up to gain a perspective must forever look up from the bottom. Since the position is a common one for child and man, it is called "practical." It is not. It is the angle of maximum distortion and minimum distinction. From such an angle, nothing is ever seen whole or even in good measure. For want of perspective, the earth looks flat, children seem beastly, and teaching seems mean. Instead of easing the pain by tinting glasses rose, a philosophy of education attempts to provide a new perspective from which the teacher can see new dimensions of the problem. Philosophy enables a man to use his depth perception to maximum advantage. Now that is something that *is* practical.

The overriding responsibility of the school, the responsibility it cannot shirk without disaster and may not sacrifice to any other aim, however worthy, is its responsibility for providing intellectual training.
—Arthur Bestor

If there is an immortal hypothesis about the nature of education, it must be this: if a child is to be educated, then his mind must be trained to reason. Throughout the centuries philosophers and educators have frankly and freely assented to the validity of the proposition that education *is* the development of the intellect. Read the words of such diverse scholars as John Cardinal Newman, John Dewey, and Robert Hutchins:

Liberal Education, viewed in itself, is simply the cultivation of the intellect, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence.[1]

It is [education's] business . . . to ingrain into the individual's working habits methods of inquiry and reasoning appropriate to the various problems that present themselves. . . . The formation of these habits is the Training of Mind.[2]

Today as yesterday we may leave experience to other institutions and influence and emphasize in education the contribution that it is supremely fitted to make, the intellectual training of the young.[3]

2

As Hutchins implies, for many scholars anything other, or less than, the development of the intellect is felt to be something other, or less than, an education, and schooling that focuses on practical instruction is anti-intellectual. Thus, schooling that has vocational (e.g., preparation of craftsmen or artisans) or professional (e.g., preparation of teachers or physicians) objectives is merely training and not truly education, since the life of mind is secondary or ignored. Historically an old belief, this is also a contemporary one, here expressed in the words of a present-day school superintendent:

> . . . if the schools are to remain, or perhaps become, institutions of learning with a primary emphasis upon intellectual matters, and not super social service stations or emotional herbariums for the cultivation of the flowers of sentiment, we must make the raw assumption that it is the mind of the student with which the school must be concerned.[4]

According to these views, education is the training of the mind.

Yet, *what is the "mind"*? What is it that stands central to the nature of human nature and therefore central to the education of man?

Is the mind, as René Descartes claimed, a nonmaterial substance that thinks and has as its essence pure thought? Was John Locke nearer the truth when he argued that the mind is a *tabula rasa*, a blank tablet, upon which the senses write a description of material reality? Shall we believe Bertrand Russell's assertion that the mind is the brain functioning? Should we agree with John Dewey, who asserts that mind is not a thing, be that thing an immaterial thought or a material brain, but rather a name for an intelligently planned and directed course of action?

Whatever it is, or is said to be, the *concept* of mind in education has a purpose not unlike that of the keystone in an arch: the whole structure depends upon it; remove it and all collapses. But here the analogy too collapses, for all agree on the basic nature and function of the keystone, but not everyone agrees on the basic nature and function of the mind. Indeed, it may fairly be said that the distinctions between classical and contemporary theories of mind lead, as might be expected, to differences of opinion about mental discipline and, therefore, to disagreements about the very means and ends of education itself.

[Footnotes for the opening page of a chapter will always appear on the second page of that chapter.]

[1] John Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University* (London: Longmans, Green & Company, Ltd., 1886), p. 121.

[2] John Dewey, *How We Think* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Company, 1910), pp. 27, 28.

[3] Robert M. Hutchins, *The Higher Learning in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), p. 69.

[4] William H. Cornog, quoted in *CBE Bulletin*, III, 4 (November 1958), 14.

The contemporary philosopher and educator, Gilbert Ryle, says that

> There is a doctrine about the nature and place of minds which is so prevalent among theorists and even among laymen that it deserves to be described as the official theory. . . . The official theory, which hails chiefly from Descartes, is something like this: with the doubtful exceptions of idiots and infants in arms every human being has both a body and a mind.[5]

History amply confirms Ryle's thesis that man—be he scholar or layman—has tended to divide himself into two parts, one part mind or mental and one part body which is matter, hence material. Ryle's choice of the term "official theory" is highly pertinent, for if we review classical bodies of thought, the brand names of which might be idealism, realism, or Thomism, we do find an authoritative formula for the human equation that reads "Mind + Body = Man."

This is not to say, in oversimplified fashion, that philosophic tradition views man as "half angel, half ape" or "half material, half immaterial," or even "half natural, half supernatural" just as some milk is bottled part cream and part milk, with the cream floating on the milk so that both comprise the whole but neither is an integral part of the other. Rather, to extend the figure, man is homogeneous like homogenized milk, with the essence of his sameness being part mind, part matter.

While it is not our purpose here to indicate in detail the historical and logical reasons for such a definition of human nature, it should be noted in passing that in the long stream of philosophical and educational thought the concept of mind has often been bound up with the notion of soul. In classical thought both have frequently been defined as immaterial (i.e., nonmaterial) realities. In some traditions the mind *is* the soul or, alternately, that part of the soul that thinks or makes thought possible. Two contemporary Catholic thinkers illustrate one classical point of view in these words:

> In its simplest meaning, intellectual education is the enlightenment and training of the faculty of *thought*. This faculty is termed the intellect, and is usually described as the spiritual, cognitive power of the soul. Being spiritual, it is intrinsically independent of matter. . . . "Intellect" may be specifically defined as the spiritual faculty, supraorganic in character, by which things are known. . . . Therefore, the intellect is a "power" or "capacity" of that one, abiding, substantial, indivisible, spiritual principle of life, called the soul.[6]

[5] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1949), p. 11.

[6] John Redden and Francis Ryan, *A Catholic Philosophy of Education* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1942), pp. 217, 218.

Thus we see that the mind-body dualism can spring from a concept of soul, which in turn serves as the defined principle of life. While history offers no firm record it is reasonable to conclude that early mankind, in an attempt to distinguish between life and death, hit upon "soul" as the principle of life, with lack of it signifying death. Too, it is likely that the concept of soul was not original but secondary and derived, for it seems clear that in the beginnings of his intellectual career man did not clearly distinguish between himself and his environment, between his thoughts and his actions, between his mind and his body. As Charles Morris reports,

> Man only becomes vividly conscious of himself and of his reflecting processes in the course of a long evolution, in which, as a result of a continual struggle demanded by the search for a more secure existence, he is forced to pay attention to himself and his intellectual tools upon which so much of his fate depends. The attitude of primitive man makes no sharp distinction between mind and nature, between a private subjective life of consciousness and an outward world of corporeal events. There is no formulated problem as to how mind and nature can interact, or how mind can know a world that is not mind.[7]

To earliest man a sheer physicalism was the dominant fact of life. But there was death to be eventually encountered—and explained. Given his developing but limited facilities for explanation, and working with the
30 clearly experienced categories of "living" and "not living," man was obviously aware of some physical causes of life (he, too, knew that the stork story was fiction) and death (he knew the dangers of field and forest), but he lacked an explanation of why a man could be alive this moment and not the very next. Nothing in his physical experience, as such, satisfied his need to know—simply to say that "it happens" was inadequate—so he reached out beyond the physical, to a metaphysical explanation. Hence the concept of the soul emerged as an invisible thing or force or power or ability that slipped into a body to give it life for a brief time, then fled to leave that body lifeless. Here was an explanation early man, and most of his descendents, could believe. With the addition of the concept of "soul" to his intellectual vocabulary man had come to define himself in dualistic terms: he was clearly a physical being and, at the same time, not completely or purely physical. He was natural, as his body testified by its life and death, yet he was also supernatural, as his soul testified by its eternal life.

By the time man had invented language and writing (as the very earliest fragments demonstrate) the idea of man's soul was firmly fixed in race memory and folk belief, and the relationship between God, mind, and knowledge had emerged—as Anaxagoras illustrates by his assertion that "Mind is infinite and self-ruled and is mixed with nothing. . . . It is the

[7] Charles W. Morris, *Six Theories of Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), p. 2.

thinnest of all things and the purest, and it possesses all knowledge and the greatest power." [8] It is in Greek philosophy, progenitor of most Western thought, that we see most clearly the linkage of knowledge with the mind and of mind with God, and the eventual conclusion that man is possessed of both mind and body. Further, only when mind governs body is man truly human, in control—not wild but civilized.

The educational import of this is not hard to decipher: the education of man must focus on training his mind, developing his intellect, so that he can fulfill his purpose as a rational being and develop his God-given ability to gain knowledge through reason. This is not to deny the importance of the body, as the classical injunction that education should develop a sound mind in a sound body (*mens sano, corpore sano*) reminds us; but it is just as clearly a reminder that whatever is done for the body, by way of physical education, is done indirectly for the benefit of the life of mind, for when body governs mind man sinks to the level of mere animal existence.

Still, to assert that man consists of mind and body, that human nature is at once spiritual and physical, and that man's education should focus upon the mind, is not yet to respond to the question posed earlier: "What is in the mind, what is it that stands central to human nature and therefore central to the education of man?"

For some classicists the human mind was thought to be a nonmaterial entity consisting of pure form spiritually linked to a Universal Mind—sometimes described as God—which was Ultimate Reality itself and, thereby, the vessel holding all knowledge.

Unclear as such concepts might seem to the philosophically uninitiated, they are indeed in the mainstream of Western philosophical and educational thought, for with our cultural heritage we have become accustomed to hearing the propositions that God is an ineffable spirit, that He is omnipotent and omniscient, and that He can when He wills reveal to us the truths of His universe. So much we have learned at our mother's knee or in Sunday school; perhaps what we did not learn, unless we were listening carefully, was that such theological concepts are the direct product of traditional philosophy, which awarded to each man an implicit mind related, in some supernatural way, to the Great Mind of the universe—"a wheel in a wheel way in the middle of the air."

From this it was reasonable to conclude that mind, in itself and as such, is indescribable, indefinable, and all the more marvelous in a grand and mysterious way. Even so, depending upon the analogy preferred, mind was viewed either as a container of implicit ideas or concepts (to be called into consciousness upon proper stimulation) or as an undeveloped

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

potential for the creation or receipt of ideas. Either way it served as a dynamo of infinite power.

Philosophic idealism, beginning with Plato, emphasizes the role of mind as an agent of reason or producer of ideas. As the contemporary idealist Louise Antz has put it,

> The word *idea* is Greek, and means that which by nature is clear and intelligible. It means that which has form, the opposite of chaotic. But the Greeks derived *idea* from *idein, to see*; and *to see* is a mental activity. Plato's expression, "To see with the eye of the mind" is a way of saying "To know through one's power of reason." *Reason* for classical philosophy is the power or structure of mind which enables it to grasp and work with its objects, whether in a cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, practical, or technical way.[9]

This quotation illustrates a traditional belief that knowledge is contained in or produced by ideas, that ideas are the product of the mind, and, therefore, that the mind of man (or God) is the only sure and reliable source of knowledge. From such a logic it is not difficult to perceive why education is said to focus upon the training of the mind. For the idealist, then, mind is the power to produce or receive ideas, ideas that in their turn make the sensations or perceptions we receive intelligible and thus, in the process of concept formation, yield to us the power and ability to possess knowledge. This places Mind outside us and minds within each of us. Learning involves a two-way communication between minds and Mind. The training consists of tuning individual minds to the frequency of Absolute Mind so it can vibrate by harmonic induction.

Not all classical thought held mind to be an immaterial yet substantive object. There is also a strong, deep, continuing tradition that mind is not a thing-in-itself, material or immaterial, and perhaps not even a part of or function of the soul. Rather, "mind" is a term we use to describe certain functions of the brain.

The linkage of the mind with the brain is illustrated by the theory that mind is a blank tablet upon which is written a person's perceptual experience and out of which emerges his conceptual possessions—his stock of ideas. Perception is the pen by which experience writes upon the blank pages of the book that is mind. In this tradition, whether the mind is seen as an independent nonmaterial entity causally linked to the dependent, material brain, or merely the brain as it functions in certain ways, it is said to act as exterocepter and interocepter. That is, it acts externally (by analogy to the eye or a mirror) to serve as a lens that reflects or transmits perceptions of the physical world to the intellect; and it acts internally (by

[9] Louise Antz, "Idealism as a Philosophy of Education," in *Philosophy of Education: Essays and Commentaries*, Hobert W. Burns and Charles J. Brauner, eds. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1962), p. 238.

analogy to a computer) as a receiver, classifier, and codifier to translate perceptions into conceptions, or ideas, by which a person comes to have knowledge. To the extent that men function alike in a common field called experience so are the lessons inscribed alike on each blank tablet except for inherent flaws or defects. The same lessons on the same kinds of slates enable men to think alike and share common meanings.

In more recent years some segments of traditional thought—perhaps most notably aspects of philosophic realism—have come to discard the "soul hypothesis," which linked mind to the soul and thereby laid the groundwork of the body-mind dualism, and to view man as a strictly biological organism. This view concludes that the mind-body dichotomy is an error and, in consequence, sees mind itself as a word—a semantic device—that refers to a certain kind of bodily activity. Lindesmith and Strauss comment succinctly but pertinently upon this more contemporary view of mind:

> The mind-body error may be avoided if one remembers that *such terms as mind and thought refer to activities rather than to entities.* "Mental" activities are activities of an organism, not of a disembodied mind. . . . [thus] a question frequently asked, "Does the mind control the body?" is really nonsensical since the term "mind" itself refers to bodily activity.[10]

In classical thought, however, which runs from the pre-Socratics to contemporary philosophers and educators, it is generally believed that an agent or faculty called mind is necessary to explain and make possible human reason, knowledge, and the communication of ideas. For early classicists, such as the idealists and Thomists, mental activities like remembering, imagining, and thinking did not harmonize with their experiences of natural, physical phenomena. They could find these activities nowhere in nature, and thus they saw man as something apart from nature. So they concluded that mind must exist and be both immaterial and supernatural. Later traditionalists, impressed with the power of empiricism and disenchanted with metaphysical explanations that raised more questions than they answered, rejected dualism as a tenable approach to man and mind and, instead, "located" mind in the brain and defined it as a function of that bodily organ. At the same time they had gone some distance toward viewing man as a part of nature.

For most traditional philosophers, then, mind is the agent or the power to produce ideas; these ideas, in turn, make perceptions comprehensible through concept formation and, hence, give the human alone among all animals the ability to possess knowledge not only of man and the universe of things (the natural) but of mind and the universe of thought (the

[10] Alfred R. Lindesmith and Anselm L. Strauss, *Social Psychology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1949, rev. ed., 1956), p. 211. Italics added.

supranatural). Such a man is already half God-like. But how do you train a demi-god. Tuning his mind to an ultimate frequency is like tuning a piano. Writing lessons on a blank slate is more like fitting an upright with a piano role. Both persist.

Clearly, man learns. In what ways does he learn? Obviously (speaking from a traditional frame of reference) in many ways—not the least of which is in the act of thinking, of reasoning: education *is* the training of the mind. Does it make good sense to say that the mind can be developed by thought when, indeed, we have already been told that it is the very function of mind to think and produce ideas? If so, the notion of improvement through practice or exercise is involved. Does one learn to see better by looking? How else? Not by refusing to open your eyes. Yet, initially, did you learn to see? By analogy, it makes at least as much sense to say that our muscles can be developed by hard work when, at the same time, we are told it is the muscles' very function to do work. And here is suggested one of the most wide-spread beliefs about mind, a belief that follows expectedly from traditional conceptions of mind: mind is a muscle to be strengthened by mental exercise; intellectual gymnastics will result in a generalized strengthening of the power to think and to reason. (Perry Mason plays chess to strengthen his ability to think strategically so that he can defeat Mr. Berger in court.)

Contemporary psychologists insist that the theory of mind as a muscle that can be strengthened by mental exercise is factually light weight, but even so it is easy to see why educators who are impressed with traditional philosophic viewpoints try to find pedagogical methodologies that follow from, or are in harmony with, philosophic conceptions of mind.

Consider, for example, the educator impressed with idealism. Is it not understandable why he places such a stress on (to illustrate) the Socratic dialogue—the give and take of ideas—as sound pedagogy? Given his theory of mind, he expects truth out of such a dialogue, in which two minds are being honed against each other, this rational dialogue is as a chorus; each voice tunes the other until a clear note swells up and an idea rings true. After all, is not the development of this choir of intellect the end and object of education? Communication among minds within the field of force that is Mind is the only way to clarify ideas.

Or consider, again, the educator impressed with realism. Is it not understandable why he places such a stress on (to illustrate) an "object lesson" —the use of a physical object to stimulate and produce ideas in the mind —as sound pedagogy? Given his theory of mind, he expects that such a Pestalozzian "object lesson," in which pupils would perceive, describe, discuss, and consider the object at hand, will increase the mind's power to abstract, to reason, to acquire knowledge—and, after all, is not the development of a discriminating intellect the end and object of educa-

tion? [11] Physical contact with a ball imprints upon the blank tablet of the mind a picture of spherical form which then can be measured by comparison against an ideal notion of sphericity.

On balance, classical conceptions of education are geared to a theory of mind that grows out of philosophical and theological beliefs, rather than "hard" empirical data about child behavior and learning. These conceptions are, in the main, based on the assumption that man's dual nature requires pedagogical theories and techniques that would develop, improve, and strengthen the mind. The organic link, the functional connection, between classical beliefs about mind and education is best seen in traditional approaches to mental discipline. They point out the ways for tuning a mind or for inscribing a blank tablet.

CLASSICAL CONCEPTIONS OF MENTAL DISCIPLINE

In the classical tradition mental discipline means, first, developing the implicit powers of reason that lie embedded in the mind and, second, stocking the mind with knowledge. From this definition it follows that well-founded educational processes are those that ensure that pupils are carefully instructed in logic so they can reason correctly and, of course, that pupils are given ample opportunity to stock their minds with knowledge.

In this context two presuppositions buttressed with religious support should be made clear: first, knowledge when properly defined consists of eternal verities rather than temporal facts, it is absolute rather than relative; second, this kind of knowledge can be produced by the mind only, not by the senses, since it comes from reason, not from experience. *These twin beliefs about the means and end of inquiry stand central to the traditional thesis of mental discipline.*

The classical tradition in philosophy and education has held, and still holds, that the knowledge of most worth is metaphysical rather than empirical; and since empirical or scientific inquiry does not lead to those absolute, metaphysical truths that constitute the corpus of knowledge *per se*, those in the classical tradition conclude that fruitful inquiry must of necessity rely upon such nonempirical methods as reason, intuition, or revelation. Denigration of sensory experience, empiricism, and empirical knowledge in favor of pure reason, rationalism, and metaphysical knowledge is the bench mark of classicism. From such a philosophic position concerning the nature of knowledge and the means and end of inquiry,

[11] It might be noted that the concepts of mind as represented in Pestalozzi's "Object Teaching" had a great impact upon American public education. In the last century Edward Sheldon conducted the now famous experiments at Oswego and Utica (New York) that used "Object Teaching," with educational results judged to be of such import that the National Teachers Association (forerunner of the N.E.A.) endorsed the methodology. In consequence more than one generation of schoolteachers was trained in normal schools where "Object Teaching" was akin to an official pedagogical methodology. It may well be that you can remember being on the receiving end of an "Object Lesson" during your own elementary education.

it has been concluded that the ultimate end of education can only be to develop the rational powers inherent in man's God-given mind and, by training and using these powers, to discover what universal truths we can so as to stock-pile them in the minds of men.

Of these two components of the disciplined mind the first—ability to reason—is said by some to be more important than the second—possession of knowledge—since thought is the proper method of securing information. Or, put more simply, while the acquisition of a body of knowledge might be viewed as an intrinsic end, valuable in and of itself, some traditionalists argue that since we acquire or utilize this knowledge only if we have an ability to reason it follows that the most important feature in training the mind is the cultivation of logical ability. Without intending to undercut the importance of a mind well-stocked with knowledge, many classicists believe that training the mind, when properly conceived, *means* the development of reason through the medium of logic—and that this, rather than the possession of knowledge, is *the* proper end of education. This attitude is justified on the belief that the ability to reason is a general and heuristic power and, therefore, a well-trained mind is surely capable of attaining knowledge.

Even so, the majority of classicists reject this argument on the ground that it emphasizes means rather than ends; that is, while affirming the power of mind to acquire knowledge by reason, the counter-argument in-

sists that the process must not be confused with, or valued above, the product. These traditionalists believe that since there are other means to the end of universal knowledge and absolute truth—the means of intuition or revelation—it is thus possible for man to have knowledge even though his rational facilities might not be fully developed. In this sense we note that classicists differ as to whether the training of the mind should emphasize the means of securing knowledge (i.e., reason) or the end of possessing a body of knowledge (i.e., the well-funded mind).

These are but slight disagreements, however, for outstanding thinkers in the classical tradition have consistently insisted that means and ends should not be so torn asunder, stressing that mental discipline refers to *both* the process of reason (logical inquiry) *and* the product of that reason (true knowledge). In this sense mental discipline has two related aspects, the mind whose powers of reason have been developed *and* the mind that is in possession of knowledge. Hutchins reflects this point of view when he offers the definition that "An intellect properly disciplined, an intellect properly habituated, is an intellect able to operate well in all fields." [12] By "properly habituated" he means well stocked with knowledge; and both are essential components of mental discipline. No one bottles reason in a vacuum of facts orbiting alone in intellectual space. Yet those who focus on the *how* of reason often have special sets of facts which are indispen-

[12] Hutchins, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

sable while those who stress the *what* of the facts often concentrate on certain disciplines with a kind of reasoning already built in.

Indeed, in this brief passage Hutchins yields a further clue to classical beliefs about mental discipline—for when he asserts that a well-trained mind is capable of operating in all fields he is implying, at one and the same time, not only that reason is the proper method of inquiry no matter what subject matter is at hand but, further, that subject matters that are not susceptible to reason alone may not be of such value as to be considered important for inquiry. Put more bluntly, many classicists, because they define absolute knowledge as the only truly valuable knowledge, seek to discover truths that are in their very nature universal; in consequence, they look down upon bodies of information that are more particularistic, more specific, more empirical because they are gained by means of empirical inquiry. While not dismissing the immediate utility of empirical inquiry and the information secured through experience, classicists do view the methods and products of such inquiry as something less than real knowledge and thus of considerably less value than knowledge that results from the application of pure reason to metaphysical problems.

On balance, then, the classical tradition would have us believe that training the mind means developing our implicit powers of reason; and this, in turn, has often come to mean teaching pupils the rule of logical systems on the assumption that such systems represent the proper, correct, and intended use of the mind. And, still on balance, the classical tradition would also have us believe that the mind so trained is disciplined—which is to say that it would, as a consequence, come to possess those bodies of certain, indubitable, metaphysical knowledges that represent ultimate and absolute truth.

We have not yet identified all the major ingredients of the classical tradition of mental discipline. There lies in traditional thought about the use of logical reason as the means to metaphysical truth the presupposition that *some knowledge, some truth* can be had without the use of logic and reason—*that there are, in short, some self-evident truths, things man knows to be true independently of his reason or his use of his reason.*

This presupposition is necessary for, as we all know, the rules of logic are such that the conclusions of logical inquiry can only be as good as the data we feed into the logical mill and the way the mill grinds out its conclusions. More simply, such conclusions are true and valid only if the premises themselves are true and the reasoning itself has been correct. To illustrate: If A is greater than B, and B is greater than C, then A is greater than C.

But what assurance do we have that A is indeed greater than B, or that B is greater than C? That is, *how are we to be assured that the premises are themselves true?* By definition the classical tradition will not let us use sensory experience to verify all premises—for that would be admitting

that sensory experience, or empirical knowledge, is a valid source of truth. Nor can we use logic itself to verify the premises—for we would then have to ask how the premises of that earlier initial logic were verified, and so on *ad infinitum*. Clearly, since the initial set of premises cannot be verified by an appeal either to experience or reason, there must—if the whole classical theory is to be sustained—be another road to truth, another source of knowledge. And there is: the belief that some things are self-evidently true, that there are ideas or propositions that simply cannot be doubted, that are seen to be true on presentation to our mind or that are known to be true because they were intuited by us or revealed to us. The concept of self-evidence, that some ideas can properly vouch for their own truth, thus becomes an integral part of the classical tradition in philosophy.[13]

The second aspect of the classical approach to mental discipline—that a mind well disciplined is a mind well stocked with knowledge—is one so familiar that it can be illustrated by a brief quotation not from a scholar but from a newspaper. Read the editorial opinion of the *San Francisco News*: [14]

> This is a book containing the history of the United States, from the discovery of the continent right down to Truman's veto of the Tidelands Bill. The class will now get busy and by next June we expect you to know what has happened. You must learn this because you must know the facts of history before you can go deeply into the reasons for those happenings.

In all fairness, the issue is not whether a student should have at his command a fund of information, a collection of related facts, or an understanding of a body of knowledge—for even the most progressive of educators would agree to that. The issue is whether such a fund of information is an end in and of itself or whether it is means to the end of successful human activity; *the issue is whether knowledge is of intrinsic or instrumental value*. The classical insistence that knowledge is its own end, that it is valuable in and of itself, drives to the very heart of traditional beliefs about mental discipline because it drives to the very heart of a firm traditional position in epistemology.

Many contemporary philosophers, most notably pragmatists, prefer as a matter of linguistic convention to use the word "knowledge" only to describe information that has been used as a tool in solving some human problematic situation. Quite to the contrary, however, those in the classical tradition find such a distinction of no value; indeed, some have argued that it is a disservice because reducing "knowledge" to "applicable infor-

[13] And often, when translated into educational theory and practice, the concept of self-evidence is used to justify the indoctrination of certain curricular content (should not absolute, self-evidently true knowledge be taught as such?) and the employment of rigid, rote methodology (why should children be allowed to question or doubt such truths—is it not more efficient for them to accept unquestioningly such truths?).

[14] *The San Francisco News*, August 2, 1946.

mation" gives knowledge the status of an intellectual harlot whose value is determined by its functional utility when, in fact, knowledge should reign supreme even if (or perhaps, especially if) it is virginally pure and untouched by human use. As they see it, man needs knowledge but knowledge needs neither to be known or put to use, hence, it has no need for man.

Recall, as noted earlier (in a discussion of the epistemological positions identified as dogmatism and fallibilism), classicists tend to view information gained through experience, since it is relative and probable rather than absolute and certain, as something less than true knowledge. Knowledge worthy of the name is absolute, it is certain, and since these terms can never be applied to the results of empirical inquiry true knowledge is metaphysical and not empirical—and it is this kind of true knowledge that should be possessed if, in Hutchin's phrase, a mind is to be properly habituated. Knowledge is the honored and permanent guest.

This is not to say, of course, that in the classical tradition there is no use for those bodies of information culled from human experience—as, for example, in the physical, behavioral, or social sciences—but it is to say that information of this caliber, while useful, is of less ultimate value than knowledge of metaphysical realities—as, for example, in philosophy or theology—which is gained only by a mind trained to recognize self-evident truths and, by application of proper logic, to reason out ever more subtle truths.

The well-stocked mind, then, does contain some empirical information of use (it could not be otherwise), but the truly well-stocked mind also possesses a good quantity of higher quality information—absolute, certain, metaphysical knowledge. The latter governs the use of the former thus insuring that a wise man will be a good man. Thus, in the educational process, the classical tradition is most concerned about metaphysical knowledge, wrought out of reason, and somewhat considerably less enthusiastic about the empirical information that may be teased out of experience.

For a review of the classical approach to training the mind—an approach that hinges on certain conceptions of human nature, mind, intellect, and mental discipline—let us consider an extended passage by Hutchins:

> Every man has a function as a man. The function of a citizen or a subject may vary from society to society, and the system of training, or adaptation, or instruction, or meeting immediate needs may vary with it. But the function of man as man is the same in every age and in every society where such a system can exist: it is to improve man as man. . . .
>
> To talk about making men better we must have some idea of what men are, because if we have none, we can have no idea of what is good or bad for them. If men are brutes like other animals, then there is no reason why they should not be treated like brutes by anybody who can gain power over them. And there is no reason why they should not be trained as brutes are trained. A sound philosophy in general suggests that men

are rational, moral, and spiritual beings and that the improvement of men means the fullest development of their rational, moral, and spiritual powers. All men have these powers, and all men should develop them to the fullest extent. . . .

Education deals with the development of the intellectual powers of men. . . . [but] we cannot talk about the intellectual powers of men, though we talk about training them, or amusing them, or adapting them, and meeting their immediate needs, unless our philosophy in general tells us that there is knowledge and that there is a difference between true and false. We must believe, too, that there are other means of obtaining knowledge than scientific experimentation. . . . [and] if we are to set about developing the intellectual powers of men through having them acquire knowledge of the most important subjects, we have to begin with the proposition that experimentation and empirical data will be of only limited use to us. . . .[15]

In sum, the classical tradition holds that man has a mind with inherent intellectual powers; that man can, if he will but develop these powers of the mind, come to recognize clearly as true, absolute, and certain knowledge; that the school is the deliberate instrument by which man's mind can be trained and knowledge warehoused therein; but that all hinges upon an epistemology based on a priori knowledge and self-evident truth, a psychology of mind that emphasizes logical reasoning, and an axiology that prizes knowledge most highly for its own sake.

CRITIQUE OF THE CLASSICAL TRADITION

Educators in the classical tradition, impressed with this kind of philosophical reasoning (albeit not understanding it completely, as the history of education frequently demonstrates) took the traditional approach to intellectual discipline to mean that they should (a) "teach logic" and (b) "teach facts." Less crudely put, convinced of the need to produce pupils who could think clearly and had command of a body of knowledge, and yet painfully aware of the rational limitations of pupils, these educators developed over the centuries an approach to teaching and learning based on the belief that teaching is the presentation of proper bodies of fact and value (e.g., teaching is talking), while learning is the demonstrated acquisition of this fund of information (e.g., learning is remembering). Given those illustrations offered to us by the history of education from the Encyclopaedists to the Herbartians, it is not at all farfetched to say that in many schools education became the process of stuffing content into the minds of children. This content, somehow, represented the ideal of knowledge. To this view of knowledge as conclusions digested was added the process of making children wrestle with abstract, contentless logical or mathematical derivations, which somehow represented the ideal of reason.

[15] Robert M. Hutchins, *The Conflict in Education in a Democratic Society* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1953).

Often in both instances there was the unspoken demand that children "learn" such things whether or not they "understood" them. Again, it may well be that a thorough search of your memory will reveal more than one instance in which you were required to "master" or "learn" something, or to "get the answer," even though the meaning, significance, or use of what you had to master, learn, or answer escaped you. Indeed, even in certain classes in college you may have been expected to "learn" in this mode. Old institutions, like old men, change slowly, if at all, nor do they fade away. Once in a while they are abandoned.

In more recent years, however, many philosophers and educators have become disenchanted with both the means (logical reasoning based on self-evident truths) and ends (possession of knowledge for its own sake) of education as represented by the classical tradition. One major criticism is that the means is intellectually short-weighted, as the contemporary philosopher of education, Frederick Neff, illustrates:

> At the heart of this method of reasoning was the syllogism, which usually began with an authoritative or generally accepted premise, under which was placed a specific statement, and which then proceeded to a logical conclusion. This method was employed to advantage by medieval schoolmen, whose concern was to perpetuate orthodox canons of belief and to discourage the emergence of revolutionary or heretical views. As stated in the *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599: "Even in matters where there is no risk to faith and devotion, no one shall introduce new questions in matters of great moment, or any opinion which does not have suitable authority, without first consulting his superiors. . . ."

> Needless to say, such a system resulted more in continually reaffirming conventional creeds than in anything like fresh or vital modes of inquiry. In fact, honest inquiry was virtually impossible, for such a system required that the premises of logic consist of a proposition already firmly established by traditional outlooks. Since no new conclusions could emerge, intellectual disciplines consisted largely in mastering the rules of logic, rather than in questioning or inquiring. As Francis Bacon has stated it, "The present system of logic rather assists in confirming and rendering inveterate the errors founded on vulgar notions, than in searching after truth; and is therefore more hurtful than useful." [16]

As Neff suggests, a basic criticism of traditional logic is that:

> Methods of reasoning about an ultimate reality become understandably limited. . . . And so a system of logic came into being which took as its purpose either to "prove" through nonempirical reasoning what had been born of a priori speculation, or to build quite "logical" hierarchies, often magnificent in their intricacies, upon premises that were as faulty as the undeveloped sciences of their day.[17]

[16] Frederick C. Neff, "Six Theories of Intellectual Discipline," *Educational Theory*, VII, 3 (July 1957), p. 164.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

In fine, the means are subject to the practical criticism that they are outmoded and inefficient, that they are in fact not productive even of the ends sought.

As for the ends of education, when translated into a theory of mental discipline holding that the mind is a passive instrument to be stuffed full of knowledge that may or may not have any human utility, Alfred North Whitehead offers—in his usual direct style—a criticism that is now widespread:

> . . . it is always possible to pump into the minds of a class a certain quantity of inert knowledge. . . . But what is the point of teaching a child to solve a quadratic equation? There is a traditional answer to this question. It runs thus: The mind is an instrument, you first sharpen it, and then use it; the acquisition of the power of solving a quadratic equation is part of the process of sharpening the mind. Now there is just enough truth in this answer to have made it live through the ages. But for all its half-truth, it embodies a radical error which bids fair to stifle the genius of the modern world. I do not know who was first responsible for this analogy of the mind to a dead instrument. For aught I know, it may have been one of the seven wise men of Greece, or a committee of the whole lot of them. Whoever was the originator, there can be no doubt of the authority which it has acquired by the continuous approval bestowed upon it by eminent persons. But whatever its weight of authority, whatever the high approval it can quote, I have no hesitation in denouncing it as one of the most fatal, erroneous, and dangerous conceptions ever introduced into the theory of education. The mind is never passive; it is a perpetual activity, delicate, receptive, responsible to stimulus. You cannot postpone its life until you have sharpened it.[18]

Dewey joins Whitehead in his criticism that schools under the influence of the classical tradition too often view education as the passive absorption of knowledge:

> In schools, those under instruction are too customarily looked upon as acquiring knowledge as theoretical spectators, minds which appropriate knowledge by direct energy of intellect. The very word pupil has almost come to mean one who is engaged not in having fruitful experiences but in absorbing knowledge directly. Something which is called mind or consciousness is severed from the physical organs of activity. The former is thought to be purely intellectual and cognitive; the latter to be an irrelevant and intruding physical factor.[19]

This rejection of traditional conceptions of mental discipline stems from

[18] Alfred N. Whitehead, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), pp. 8–9.

[19] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p. 164.

the prior rejection of a division of human nature into mind and body. As Dewey says:

> It would be impossible to state adequately the evil results which have flowed from this dualism of mind and body, much less to exaggerate them. Some of the more striking effects may, however, be enumerated. (a) In part bodily activity becomes an intruder. Having nothing, so it is thought, to do with mental activity, it becomes a distraction, an evil to be contended with. For the pupil has a body, and brings it to school along with his mind. And body is, of necessity, a wellspring of energy; it has to do something. But its activities, not being utilized in occupation with things which yield significant results, have to be frowned upon. They lead the pupil away from the lesson with which his "mind" ought to be occupied; they are sources of mischief. The chief source of the "problem of discipline" in schools is that the teacher has often to spend the larger part of the time in suppressing the bodily activities which take the mind away from its material. A premium is put on physical quietude; on silence, on rigid uniformity of posture and movement, upon a machine-like simulation of the attitudes of intelligent interest.[20]

Paradoxically enough, the separation of mind from body and the subsequent traditional emphasis on the mind has led, in educational practice, to a co-emphasis on verbal learning which too often has dwindled to mere verbalism:

> The common assumptions that, if the pupil only thinks, one thought is just as good for his mental discipline as another, and that the end of study is the amassing of information, both tend to foster superficial, at the expense of significant, thought. Pupils who in matters of ordinary practical experience have a ready and acute perception of the difference between the significant and the meaningless, often reach in school subjects a point where all things seem equally important or equally unimportant, where one thing is just as likely to be true as another, and where intellectual effort is expended not in discriminating between things, but in trying to make verbal connections among words.[21]

In this respect many contemporary thinkers disagree, not with the ideal that education should train the mind, but with the classical philosophies which have so defined man and mind that the concept and practice of training the mind has resulted in a sterile training that neither trains the mind nor offers the student an education.

From dissatisfaction which traditional modes of philosophic thought and educational practice, plus the growth over time of empiricism in both science and philosophy, emerged newer conceptions of mind and mental discipline, and from these came newer ideas of what "training the mind" should mean.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 165.
[21] Dewey, *How We Think*, p. 37.

A position counter to classical rationalism emerged at least as early as the seventeenth century when Francis Bacon published his *Novum Organum*, in which his conception of a new method of inquiry laid the basis for what we now call the "scientific method." The growth of empirical method, at first applied to the physical sciences, led to the emancipation of such fields as physics, chemistry, astronomy, and biology from their millennia-long domination by classical philosophy, and by the following century physical science was clearly no longer the handmaiden of philosophic rationalism.

Once the tremendous theoretical and predictive power of the scientific method was released, and as the verified conclusions of the physical sciences came more and more to discredit the earlier conclusions produced by a classical approach to philosophy that relied upon pure reason, a priorism, intuition, and revelation for its methods, the epistemological status of empirical science grew and that of philosophic rationalism declined. One by one the sciences discarded their age-old ties with classical philosophy—first that group we call the physical sciences broke loose from philosophical and theological control of their method and content, then the biological sciences, next the social sciences, and more recently the be-
44 havioral sciences. By the beginning of this century a second intellectual tradition—scientific empiricism—had so firmly established itself that it partially eclipsed theology, traditional philosophy, and literature. To cut loose the free balloons of "soul," "mind," and "spirit," empiricism severed its connection with the discussion of values and morality as carried on in philosophy and art. A man and a tradition may decide not to attempt what cannot be done well. Unable to cope well with value and moral problems the empiricists encouraged the well known separation between science and values.

In this more recent period, which was characterized by the growth of empiricism in science and philosophy, traditional conceptions of man, mind, and mental discipline have been discarded by most scholars. Dualism in philosophy has largely been supplanted, and few contemporary secular scholars continue to view man as part mind, part body. Yet, as Ryle observed by his use of the term "official theory," many laymen continue to

[22] It might seem a contradiction in terms to speak of "the modern tradition," as if anything modern could hardly at the same time be traditional. Yet in the long history of philosophic and educational history two streams of thought—the "rational" and the "empirical"—are clearly evident. Since rationalism is the elder it seems appropriate to speak of "the classical tradition"; yet, even though it is the younger, empiricism does have a history and we can speak of it as "the modern tradition" if only in the sense that, compared to rationalism, empiricism is modern and has developed its own modes of thought.

believe that man does in fact possess an "immaterial thing which thinks" —a separate faculty of mind. The continued popular belief in the classical definitions of mind, even in the face of modern behavioral science which has discredited it, led Bergen Evans to write that

> Fundamental to all vulgar errors in psychology is the assumption that the mind is a separate entity. Psychologists conceive of it as the final product of many functions, including reflexes, emotions, desires, and memories, the whole shaped by environment and circumstances, but to the layman it is a sort of invisible organ that controls and directs the body as a captain controls and directs a ship.[23]

The analogy of mind to captain, and body to ship, nicely illustrates the still-present deposit that the classical tradition has left in the thought of many people. Thus, whether discredited by science or not, some contemporary thinkers, a few scholars, and a great many laymen, not to mention more than a few educators, continue to view mind as did Plato or Aquinas so many centuries ago.

Yet in recent years, years marking the growth of empiricism and the application of the scientific method to all areas of inquiry, at least two newer conceptions of mind have appeared.

The first, growing out of a modern, empirical realistic philosophy, continues to look upon mind as an internal activity—but now as a physiological function of the brain rather than as the ratiocination of a disembodied intellect. The dualistic metaphysics of an earlier realism has been rejected and, in its stead, man is viewed as the consequence of biological evolution, and his mind—or, more aptly, the term "mind"—refers to bodily activity located or centralized in the brain and the corresponding nervous system. Even though this view has discarded the ancient metaphysics and has replaced the "mind, substantive" with the "mind, brain function," it does retain some ties to its antecedents (e.g., John Locke) in that it postulates that successful mental functions are dependent upon sensory perceptions that "write" upon the brain. John Lear, citing the work of D. O. Hebb, offers an example of this point of view:

> The functioning of the mind, that is to say, is as dependent upon psychological or sensory encouragement as the working of the brain cells depends on physical nourishment of the hereditary raw-stuff. Reasoning at the high levels intelligent men pride themselves on can be achieved during growth "only as a function of complex sensory stimulation" and "once established it is maintained only in the presence of such stimulation." [24]

[23] Bergen Evans, *The Natural History of Nonsense* (New York: Random House, 1946), p. 166.

[24] John Lear, "A New Look at the Human Mind," *Saturday Review* (April 1, 1961), p. 40.

Lear goes on to indicate how this view, while it retains what we might call ancestral ties to the early empiricism of such as Locke, Berkeley, or Hume, dismisses the concept of mind as an independent entity:

> In the classical view the mind is something distinct from sensory processes. The latter are thought of only as sources of information for the mind to use or not, at its pleasure. "Whether my mind is receiving such information or not, I would still be I, the same person, whether or not in communication with my environment" [went all traditional theories of mind].[25]

The first of the newer views, then, might fairly be identified as a biophysiological conception. It is a conception of mind that, insofar as it refers to the biological nature of man and the physiological functioning of man's brain (or mind, if you will), is basically acceptable by contemporary behavioral scientists. According to this view we would not be in error if, to make communication more precise, we simply dropped the word "mind" from our scientific, philosophic, and educational vocabularies—and, quite obviously, if we did so the idea of "training the mind" would make neither literal nor figurative sense, for it would suppose training something that does not, in fact, exist. Training the brain resembles programming a computer.*

There is, however, yet another and newer conception of mind which, while not at all denying the biological or physiological description sketched above, suggests that even this approach to mind and mental activity has shortcomings, not the least of which is that it restricts the concept of mind to the functioning of an individual brain, thereby defining mind in individual biophysiological terms. A clue to this position can be found in the words of Henry Morrison, who has argued that

> The reason for "locating" the mind in the brain is not fundamentally better than the reason for locating it in the heart or the liver, as some of the ancients thought, for the simple reason that it is absurd to locate it anywhere. It is much the same as it is with energy in the physical world. He would be an unimaginative physicist indeed who could form no conception of energy apart from a steam engine or electric generator.[26]

The inference to be made, of course, is that there are no good, compelling reasons for locating mind in either the soul or the brain, and that they are unimaginative educators indeed who can form no conception of the mind and its functions apart from an individual soul or brain.

[25] *Ibid.*

* B. F. Skinner's novel *Walden Two* provides one example of how it is done and what happens. After all the sugar is dissolved, the idyllic social structure turns out to be a human beehive.

[26] Henry Morrison, *Basic Principles in Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), p. 112.

Clearly, what is being suggested is that mind, while obviously the product of biological evolution, is restrictively conceived when viewed merely as a physiological function and is better viewed as having social as well as individual functions. Put directly, this modern empirical position is that mind is most fruitfully defined as *purposeful human activity*, individual or social, rather than as an immaterial object as in the classical tradition, or even as the brain functioning as in another contemporary empirical tradition.

One reason for preferring such a biosocial theory of mind is that it avoids the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, or the error of reification, which occurs in most classical and some contemporary definitions of mind. This error can be illustrated by reference to the thought of Descartes who, notwithstanding his genius, mistakenly believed that a function must necessarily be the product of a substance, and aware of mental functions, concluded there must exist a substance that thinks. This substance Descartes, as did others, defined as the mind; but as noted by the behavioral scientist Clark Hull, all such are guilty of reification:

> To reify a function is to give it a name and presently to consider that the name represents a thing, and finally to believe that the thing so named somehow *explains* the performance of the function.[27]

(Other examples of reification can be drawn from early physical thought: e.g., phlogiston as the "substance" that causes or permits burning, or ether as the "substance" that permits light to travel). Neither energy nor mind is to be taken as an existent. Rather, each must be viewed as a name for a class of activities that have neither a common cause for similar effects nor anything else in common except that they are lumped into one category.

Out of the belief that classicists are clearly guilty of such logical and empirical fallacies, and that the modern empirical view that mind is a biophysiological process is correct but inadequate, the conviction that mind is best described as a biosocial process has arisen. *This view holds that "mind" is a word we can justly employ to describe a kind or quality of relationship between man, men, and environment.* It is not an immaterial substance located in the soul, or in any way to be limited to an individual physical organism or encapsulated by the skin. Rather, in the words of Dewey, mind is

> . . . precisely intentional, purposeful activity controlled by perception of facts and their relationship to one another. To have a mind to do something is to foresee a future possibility; it is to have a plan for its accomplishment; it is to note the means which make the plan capable

[27] Clark L. Hull, *Principles of Behavior* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1943), p. 28.

> of execution . . . it is to have a plan which takes account of resources and difficulties. Mind is the capacity to refer present conditions to future results, and future consequences to present conditions.[28]

As noted, the significant difference between both of these contemporary, empirical theories of mind—mind as biophysiological and mind as biosocial—stems from the refutation of earlier thought, based on the rationalism of philosophy and theology rather than the empiricism of science and philosophy, which depicted man in dualistic, supranatural terms. Seen in evolutionary perspective the classical mind-body dichotomy is contrary to fact for no animal has a mind *as such* any more than it has a soul *as such* (i.e., an independent entity); instead, during the course of evolutionary development living organisms reached a point in their biological and social histories when they could communicate consciously with self and others, and at that nodal point "mind" emerged not as a thing but as a quality of behavior. Thus "mind," "life," and "energy" serve psychology, biology, and physics as concepts for naming a crucial change in state which is a natural transformation under specifiable conditions.

"Mind" thus refers to the substance of plans, ideas, and aspirations. It does not refer to any substance in itself, or to the substance that supposedly produces plans, ideas, and aspirations. It is simply wrongheaded to think of the mind as an immaterial object, as did ancient and as do classical theorists; further, it is not completely satisfactory to think of mind as merely a term to describe certain functions of the brain although, of course, mental behavior is indeed inescapably related to the physiological functioning of the brain as surely as breathing is to the lungs. Though lungs are necessary for mammals to breathe, they are not the same as "life," nor is the brain synonymous with mental activity. It may only be man's lack of experience with other organisms that makes him conclude that a brain is absolutely essential to thinking.

Indeed, according to this view a brain can function without at the same time engaging in "mental" (as differentiated from physiological) activity. Mental activity, or mind ("*mind*-ing" activity) is present only when a person deliberately employs his biologically given, environmentally developed, and brain-centered intelligence to design or plan a specific course of action. In the words of Dewey who, with George H. Mead, pioneered this concept of mind:

> . . . mind appears in experience as ability to respond to present stimuli on the basis of anticipating future possible consequences, and with a view to controlling the kind of consequences that take place.[29]

which means simply that "mind"

[28] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, pp. 120, 121.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

> . . . is not a name for something complete by itself; it is a name for a course of action in so far as that is intelligently directed; in so far, that is to say, as aims, ends, enter into it, with selection of means to further the attainment of aims.[30]

According to this view of mind—where "Mind as a concrete thing is precisely the power to understand things in terms of the use made of them [and] a socialized mind is the power to understand them in terms of the use to which they are turned in joint or shared situations" [31]—contemporary philosophers and educators would certainly agree with the age-old proposition that the proper end of education is the training of mind. Indeed, the intellectual father of progressive education,[32] John Dewey, as quoted on the opening page of this chapter, asserted that it is education's business to train the mind. But he did not mean to fill a battery with acid so it could power the machinery of the body, but rather to regulate an ever-present power flow which is at one with being alive. One does not train *the mind*, but rather he trains someone to "mind" his business, as an athlete trains to run a race.

RECENT CONCEPTIONS OF MENTAL DISCIPLINE

If words could be dissociated from specific conceptions (of course, they cannot) one might think that since both traditional and contemporary educators agree that education should train the mind then there is no significant difference between them, or that any supposedly deep philosophic differences are only semantic. But this is simply not so. The basic differences between philosophers and educators, as we have tried to show, are indeed deep and not easily resolved, for they spring from the very root of man's conception of himself and the universe he inhabits. Consequently, when such diverse thinkers as Hutchins and Dewey, whom we have used as representative of the classical and modern traditions in philosophy and education, agree that training the mind is the prime function of education, we can be assured that each means something significantly different from the other by the terms "mind" and "training the mind."

This point is easily demonstrated for, if "mind" is conceived of as a term that describes the quality of behavior, rather than as a substance that thinks, a radically different conception of mental discipline emerges. Rather than insuring that pupils can reason deductively from self-evident axioms, or filling pupils' heads with facts, mental discipline comes to mean the development of intellectual habits designed to help pupils analyze past and present behavior. Again, to cite Dewey:

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 164.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40.
[32] Intellectual parent that he was, Dewey nonetheless came to disown the bastardization of education sired by many so-called progressives because some of these illegitimate offspring were, simply put, anti-intellectual and did not "train the mind" to be scientific in temper and critical in judgment.

> . . . it is its [education's] business to cultivate deep-seated and effective habits of discriminating tested beliefs from mere assertions, guesses, and opinions, to develop a lively, sincere, and open-minded preference for conclusions that are properly grounded, and to ingrain into the individual's working habits methods of inquiry and reasoning appropriate to the various problems that present themselves. . . . The formation of these habits is the Training of the Mind.[33]

This conception of mental discipline is "generally" similar but "specifically" different from traditional conceptions. It is "generally" similar in that, like traditionalism, it is concerned with the processes and products of human reason; but it is "specifically" different in its approach to both the process and the product of intellectual inquiry. More simply, both classical and modern thinkers are concerned with the means and ends of mental discipline, but they disagree about the nature and meaning of those means and ends. One of the significant differences might be characterized by noting, as Lawrence Thomas has done, that the classical approach has emphasized *acquiring* while, in more recent times, the modern approach has come to emphasize *inquiring*.

To use these terms as suggested is to indicate that classical thinkers see the end of intellectual activity, or "acquiring," as the mastery and possession of some fixed, final, antecedently existing body of knowledge that is of intrinsic value; while modern thinkers, on the contrary, see the end of intellectual activity, or "inquiring," as the creation and implementation of a well-designed and well-executed plan of action geared to the resolution of some difficulty, some problem—the inquiry, therefore, presupposes that all bodies of knowledge are contingent, relative, and of instrumental value. The issue, succinctly put, is whether or not knowledge is an end in itself or a means to the further end of helping man solve his problems.

Too, the differences between "acquiring" and "inquiring" suggest different methodologies of coming to know: the methods of rationalism might well be proper if one wants to "acquire," but if one wants to "inquire," the methods of empiricism are more appropriate. The newer conception of mental discipline therefore rejects the traditional belief that pure reason, or intuition, or revelation can lead to knowledge, thus denigrating the classical emphasis upon deductive logic as an infallible means of discovering truth. But it does not reject logic, deductive or inductive. Logic can be a useful tool in an empirical methodology—useful only when it is geared to premises that have been tested and empirically verified, and when the conclusions suggested by the use of logic are also subject to the further test of experience. Validation, then, means meeting the test of carefully examined human experience, not obvious self-evidence or consistent logical proof.

Herein we perceive an underlying intellectual assumption of an em-

[33] Dewey, *How We Think*, pp. 27, 28.

pirical approach to mental discipline: the pupil, the inquirer, cannot hope to find an infallible means of inquiry, nor can he hope that his inquiry will lead to infallible conclusions which would represent absolute, permanent knowledge. In fine, knowledge does not have intellectual tenure; truth is not permanently appointed; and information is promoted to the status of knowledge only when it has been or can be used in the resolution of a problematic situation.

The process of inquiry, generally stated, therefore begins with some kind of difficulty or problem-situation; it proceeds when the inquirer observes, analyzes, speculates, and thinks about the nature of the situation in general and the problem in particular; it comes to a focus when, on the basis of his intellectual review, he formulates some description or definition of the difficulty and, in terms of that definition, formulates a hypothesis about the course of action that would, hopefully, remove the difficulty and make the situation less problematic; it moves to a climax when the hypothesis is tested—actually put into action, and, if such action verifies the hypothesis (if it does, the problem is solved), that particular inquiry is concluded and, in consequence, knowledge is achieved. In this context mental discipline refers at least to the hypothetico-deductive process by which (1) the problematic situation was analyzed, (2) a hypothesis was formed, and (3) the hypothesis was judged or seen to be successful or unsuccessful. This is a plan for inquiring. If "mind" is to have a plan for action, then "mental discipline" can only refer to the process of "minding"—to the process of formulating and executing such plans.

Thinking does not occur in a vacuum; ideas are not internal possessions of a substantive mind; and knowledge is not valuable for its own sake. On the contrary, thought is stimulated by problems, which are always contextual; ideas are plans of action requiring experiential tests; and knowledge becomes valuable if and only if it can be instrumental in the solution of some human difficulty. Thus,

> We may recapitulate by saying that the origin of thinking is some perplexity, confusion, or doubt. Thinking is not a case of spontaneous combustion; it does not occur just on "general principles." There is something specific which occasions and evokes it. General appeals to a child (or to a grown-up) to think, irrespective of the existence in his own experience of some difficulty that troubles him and disturbs his equilibrium, are as futile as advice to lift himself by his boot-straps,[34]

for the fact of the matter is that

> The method of intelligence manifested in the experimental method demands keeping track of ideas, activities, and observed consequences. [This] is a matter of reflective review and summarizing, in which there is both discrimination and record of the significant features of a devel-

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

> oping experience. *To reflect is to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings which are the capital stock for intelligent dealings with further experiences. It is the heart of intellectual organization and of the disciplined mind.*[35]

Wherein mind is not a noun ("*a* mind") standing for a thing but a verb ("mind-*ing*") standing for an activity, mental discipline refers to the process of critically reviewing and carefully reconstructing experience rather than merely filling the brain's memory cells with data that are to be juggled about in the abstract by application of pure reason without any consideration of implementation. He who has a disciplined mind, therefore, is he who has carefully developed the habits of reflecting on past experiences, his own and others', selecting out of experience by empirical inquiry and by thought those elements and patterns that can be used to influence and direct his future experience. It is in precisely this sense that the word "mind" is best used to describe a plan of action, and the term "disciplined mind" is best used to describe a person whose present actions and future plans are based on a critical analysis of past experiences and a deliberate decision about the nature of desired future experiences.

And, clearly, the educational activity of "training the mind" can mean little more than providing people with conceptual tools and environing conditions that allow them to learn to distinguish beliefs grounded in
52 experience from those imposed by authority and to form judgments based on an analysis of data yielded up by experience instead of mindlessly accepting judgments (prejudgments; prejudices) offered to them by "common sense." In short, to train the mind means to develop habits of inquiry that, by fruitful resolution of problems, increase a person's control over future experience. Much of *minding* involves doubting the fixed truths that the classical tradition hands down as knowledge. This sets the fallibilist against the dogmatist, the absolutist against the relativist. These deep splits cannot be bridged by agreement on a phrase such as "training the mind."

RECENT CONCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

Out of this recent philosophy of mind, and the theory of mental discipline suggested by it, has come an approach to education that attempts to avoid the pedagogical pitfalls brought on by both a mind-body dualism and a theory of mental discipline that holds that training the mind is, in effect, exercising the mind and on such ground justifies rote learning and the sheer acquisition of sheer facts. Instead, this newer conception of education emphasizes activity rather than passivity, as Whitehead suggests when he says:

> In the process of learning there should be present, in some sense or other, a subordinate activity of application. In fact, *the applications are part of the knowledge*. For the very meanings of things known is wrapped up in

[35] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 109. Italics added.

their relationships beyond themselves. Thus unapplied knowledge is knowledge shorn of its meaning.[36]

But mere activity, or sheer physical activity, is not what is here suggested; the activity, to be educational, should be purposeful and planned—and here lies an important task for the educator: to help students to learn to act, to behave, in thoughtful and meaningful ways. Gordon Hullfish and Philip Smith summarize this point clearly:

> Teachers confront neither bodiless minds nor mindless bodies. They do face human entities, individuals, each having a unique and distinctive history, and each capable of behaving *mindfully*. We may state this differently by saying that the individual is capable of doing one thing in order to achieve something else, of planning and organizing his behavior and of deliberately controlling aspects of his environment in order that an end held in view may be realized. In short, the individual is capable of acting with foresight; he is able to engage in *mindful* behavior. This does not suggest that he always does, or that he inevitably will. It merely recognizes, first, the existence of the potentiality and, second, that educative experiences of the individual (in school and out) will determine the degree to which *mindfulness* is characteristic of his actions. What happens in the classroom will be a potent factor in determining whether his actions remain routine and blind or are distinguished by an awareness of what they are about.[37]

Here education hopes to focus upon total human behavior—or on "the whole child," as the cliché would have it—rather than on one aspect of behavior; here education hopes to focus upon experience, from which both the means and ends of education are drawn; and here, above all, education hopes to focus upon intellectual behavior—the "training of the mind"—for behavior unguided by intellect is aimless and unproductive, and experience unexamined and guided by intellect is but a series of related yet discrete events incapable of contributing to the improvement of individual or social life. When "mind" is placed on a par with "energy" it becomes as important to link thought to action as to harness power to work. It is only in terms of work done that we can measure horsepower and it is only in terms of the quality of human behavior that we can assess the worth of thought.

SUMMARY

From time immemorial, philosophers and educators have said that the single major purpose of education is to train the mind, to develop the intellect. But from that same date to this one philosophers and educators have disagreed about what training the mind actually means—for they

[36] Alfred N. Whitehead, "Harvard: The Future," *Atlantic Monthly*, CLVIII (September 1936), p. 267.

[37] H. Gordon Hullfish and Philip G. Smith, *Reflective Thinking: The Method of Education* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1961), pp. 153–54.

cling to differing definitions of mind, which lead them to differing definitions of mental discipline which, in turn, lead to differing definitions of intellectual development and thereby to differing definitions of education.

On the one hand we are offered a classical tradition which, drawing upon the resources of traditional philosophy and theology, defines mind as an invisible substance that thinks thoughts and produces ideas. From this starting point we are admonished that, in schooling, these powers of the mind should be strengthened by pedagogical activities that focus upon the study of such subjects as logic, mathematics, Latin, etc., which by their very nature contribute to the development of rational powers; and additionally, by this process, the mind will come to be stocked with true ideas—knowledge—which are of absolute, intrinsic value. While such knowledge may, of course, be used in the mundane process of solving human problems, and so enrich man and society, that is not the end of education nor the source of knowledge's value. The end is, in itself, the education of man for that sake alone; knowledge is good for its sake alone; and the purpose of education should be none other than "the cultivation of the intellect, as such, [for] its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence." [38]

On the other hand, we are offered a modern tradition which, drawing upon the resources of empirical philosophy and the behavioral sciences, defines "mind" as a word that we use to describe (in individual terms)
54 the functioning of the brain and (in social terms) the development and execution of a plan of action. From this starting point we are told that, in schooling, these qualities of behavior should be developed by analyzing and reconstructing experience, and that these activities, scientifically conceived and artfully carried out, will help develop an intellectual temperament geared to the solution of the total range of human problems. In this process information, even as represented by those bodies of data known as logic, mathematics, or Latin, will be gained and utilized where relevant in problem-solving situations; but their value depends on their use and application, for the end of education is not merely the acquisition of information, but more importantly its application so as to yield man an increasing control over behavior—his own, his society's, and nature's, for the purpose of education should be none other than "to ingrain into the individual's working habits methods of inquiry and reasoning appropriate to various problems that present themselves." [39]

We have seen, then, that to say that the function of education is to train the mind is to say very little indeed—until we understand what is to be meant by "mind." But given a meaning, given a theory of mental discipline, we have the ingredients of a philosophy of education—a philosophy that, for better or worse, exerts a great deal of influence upon the actual conduct of the business of teaching.

[38] Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 121.
[39] Dewey, *How We Think*, p. 28.

From the present mode of education we cannot determine . . . whether to instruct a child in what will be useful to him in life, or what tends to virtue, or what is excellent; for all these things have their separate defenders.
—Aristotle

During the Middle ages, says Frank Sullivan in his remarkable little essay about the invention of the pretzel, when anything at all went wrong in the Holy Roman Empire it was the custom to besiege and attack Nuremberg. But here, as our American experience eloquently testifies, when anything goes wrong it is the custom to criticize and blame progressive education. Thus now and in the recent past, as the prestigious American Council of Learned Societies has reported,

. . . the criticism of our public schools and our institutions for the training of teachers has assumed a degree of vehemence which, whether justified or not, reveals dangerous schisms in the cultural life of the nation.[1]

Is there any central theme to this criticism?

3

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION BLAMED

The logic of educational criticism in recent decades, constructed by piecing together the myriad forms of criticism, holds that an entrenched educationist establishment, by willfully ignoring or ignorantly misunderstanding the true nature of education, has by now produced its second generation of illiterates and thereby caused the present thinness of our culture—and that this is because American schools are dominated by progressive education.

As Oscar Handlin notes,

> There has been a growing tendency to lay the blame for the faults of American education to a single cause. Johnny's inability to read, juvenile delinquency, the high divorce rate and the presumed failure of our scientists to keep pace with the Russians have alike been ascribed to the corrupting influence of progressive education.[2]

The merits and demerits of progressive education are not lightly debated. Critics and defenders alike all too often think and write in either-or terms: either progressive education saves the child from stifling, pedantic, rote-drill form of human animal training, or it destroys the child's mind, his cultural heritage, and eventually his society. Strong opinions strongly offered characterize the debate, and moral conviction lends its fervor. Hence Lawrence A. Cremin, the distinguished biographer of the progressive education movement,[3] could describe this drama as a contemporary morality play:

> There is currently afoot a simple story of the rise of progressivism in American education—one that has fed mercilessly on the fears of anxious parents and the hostilities of suspicious conservatives. In it John Dewey —somewhat like Abou Ben Adhem—figuratively awakes one morning with a new vision of the American school; the vision is progressive education. Over the years, with the aid of a dedicated group of crafty professional lieutenants at Teachers College, Columbia University, he is able to foist the vision off on the unsuspecting American people. The story usually ends with a plea for the exorcising of this devil from our midst and a return to the ways of the fathers.[4]

[1] Howard M. Jones, Francis Keppel, and Robert Ulich, "On the Conflict Between the 'Liberal Arts' and the 'Schools of Education,'" *ACLS Newsletter*, V, 2 (1954), 17.

[2] Oscar Handlin, "Rejoinder to the Critics of John Dewey," *New York Times Magazine* (June 15, 1958), p. 13.

[3] Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (New York: Random House), 1961.

[4] Lawrence A. Cremin, "The Progressive Movement in American Education: A Perspective," *Harvard Educational Review*, XXVII, 4 (Fall 1957), 256.

"In short," as George Stoddard puts it, "the devil reappears as the ghost of the mild, scholarly, and human John Dewey, a man who worked three-quarters of a century to remove from the eyes of youth the blinders of medieval scholasticism and superstitition." [5]

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION CRITICIZED AS LINKED TO PRAGMATISM

According to the critics, progressive education, unlike Topsy, did not "just grow'd." The intellectual chains which bind education are said to be an extension of pragmatic philosophy to educational practice. To them John Dewey's thought is the key to the lock that links pragmatism, progressivism, and educational failure in one unending chain. As critic Albert Lynd sees it, progressive methods cannot stand alone without reference to Deweyan pragmatism because "Progressivism is logically consistent with instrumental philosophy right down the line." [6]

This linkage of pragmatism with progressive education takes many forms, from gratuitous and unsupported assertions through reasoned critiques. The latter generally start with Dewey's philosophic thought and end by criticizing educational practice, or start with modern practices and end by criticizing pragmatism.

Theoretical-minded critics, such as Mortimer Adler, Robert Hutchins, or Francis Cardinal Spellman, base their critiques on a priori logic as follows: Pragmatism is a false philosophy; educational practices are logically deductible from philosophic theory; thus, modern education is in a bad way because it is logically bound up with a progressive theory of education that has grown out of pragmatism. In this mode, the critic need only read Dewey in order to determine that contemporary education must be unsound, as the two following passages indicate:

> At least two important educational consequences flow from Dewey's concept of man. First, religious education is unnecessary since there is no God, soul, life after death, divinely revealed truth, or supernatural sanction for behavior. Secondly, moral training is wholly humanistic, a kind of how-to-make-friends-and-influence-people approach to living.[7]

> . . . the Dewey philosophy holds that there is no such thing as absolute truth and that, since man is just a biological organism, there is no mind, as such. Therefore, learning and thought represent [merely] the acquiring of habits. . . .[8]

[5] George D. Stoddard, "On the Denigration of John Dewey," *Princeton Unitarian Pulpit* (November 22, 1959), p. 1.
[6] Albert Lynd, *Quackery in the Public School* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), pp. 202–3.
[7] Francis Griffith, "John Dewey? Theory and Practice," *Commonweal* (September 22, 1954), p. 604.
[8] "How Progressive Education Failed Us," *Educational Research Service Circular*, vol. VII (August 1958), p. 9.

Practical-minded critics of education, such as Arthur Bestor, Max Rafferty, or Admiral Hyman Rickover, base their critiques on a posteriori logic as follows: Contemporary education is in a bad way; there does seem to be some relationship between current educational practices, the theory of progressive education, and a pragmatic philosophy; thus, the faults of modern education are ascribable to Dewey. It is in this mode of criticism that Bernard David has decided that an asserted substitution of life-adjustment and group dynamics for self-discipline and knowledge can be traced directly to Dewey, and that soft curriculums, teachers who do not or can not teach, and academic mediocrity in general are the practical consequences of progressive educational theory.[9]

Henry Steele Commager describes the critics' linkage of Dewey and disaster in these words:

> Pragmatism is equated with "progressive education" and the vagaries of our most "progressive" school systems are ascribed, in turn, to pragmatism. That schools teach cooking and tap dancing and automobile driving rather than Latin and mathematics is blamed, in some obscure way, on . . . John Dewey [and thus] he is marked down as the god-father of every eccentricity conceived in the mind of the most shallow-minded educationalist.[10]

It is very important to note that many critics of public education, and many defenders as well, make the crucial assumptions that contemporary educational practices *are* progressive educational practices, and that both depend on a pragmatic philosophy, and that contemporary education is just what Dewey recommended. It is often assumed, for instance, that specific educational methods (e.g., the project method) and curriculums (e.g., the "life-adjustment" curriculum) depend specifically upon a pragmatic philosophy of education. Given such assumptions, critics believe a telling attack upon Dewey or pragmatism must necessarily weaken contemporary educational practices; and defenders believe that the successful defense of one automatically strengthens the other.

On this crucial assumption that contemporary educational practices are progressive educational practices, and that both are logically dependent upon Pragmatic educational thought, critics gleefully cry that Dewey and his campfollowers have been unmasked as the intellectual prostitutes they are. Spencer Brown writes,

> Ostensibly [critics] have judged Dewey by his fruits; and—what could be fairer?—if a pragmatic tree bringeth forth corrupt fruit, it must be cut down and cast into the fire.[11]

[9] Bernard David, "How Progressive Education Failed Us," *Cosmopolitan*, vol. CXLIV (April 1958), pp. 36–39.

[10] Henry Steele Commager, *Freedom, Loyalty, Dissent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 60.

[11] Spencer Brown, "The Hot War Over Our Schools," *Commentary*, XVII, 3 (March 1954), 234–35.

The defenders of progressive education, rather than questioning the vital assumption that is being made about the relationship between contemporary educational practices and pragmatic educational theory, have instead insisted that critics have been picking the fruit from the wrong tree.

It is of course true, as George Geiger says, that "Much of what passes under the title of progressive education has little to do with the philosophy of a man called John Dewey," [12] and it is also true that Dewey and some of his closest collaborators repudiated much of what came to pass in his name.[13] Frederic Ernst, for instance, insists that

> much of what called itself progressive education was just a travesty of what Dewey intended. It was due to his intervention that the perverters of the progressive movement . . . were set straight as to just what progressive education should and could be.[14]

No doubt it is necessary to set the record straight with such protests as Ernst's. Still, defenders of progressive education have spent much time, and with less than spectacular results, trying to fight off the attacks against education by saying, "But, *you don't understand Dewey*—he didn't mean that, at all!" For example:

> The criticism that Dewey advocated something called "life adjustment" and an implied "group pressure" is especially revealing, for it plainly indicates either a loose-ended reading of Dewey or simply a state of being misinformed. Dewey has said that if unqualified adjustment were all that was needed, it could best be achieved by going to sleep or by dying, and that complete adaptation to the environment was equivalent to death. Regarding the matter of conformity to group pressure, Dewey in fact urged more than anyone else an attention to, in his words, "The diversity of capacities and needs that exist in different human beings," and he criticized traditional education for assuming that "all human beings are as much alike as peas in a pod." [15]

The defenders of Dewey and his thought have therefore made it quite clear that, so far as they are concerned, the failings of contemporary education that receive the most criticism can not properly be attributed to pragmatism. Educators in the Dewey tradition have been quick to point out that:

[12] George R. Geiger, *John Dewey in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 5.

[13] *Cf.* Boyd H. Bode, *Progressive Education at the Crossroads* (New York: Newson and Co., 1938); and John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949).

[14] Frederic Ernst, "How Dangerous is John Dewey?" *Atlantic Monthly*, CXCI, 5 (May 1953), 62.

[15] Frederick C. Neff, "John Dewey and the Luce Ends of Education." *Phi Delta Kappan*, XL, 3 (December 1958), 130.

> There is nothing about pragmatism that discourages the study of Greek and mathematics and encourages the study of salesmanship and typewriting in our schools and colleges. Quite the contrary. If the accumulated experience of Western man shows—as it may well—that men trained in classics and mathematics . . . do a better job . . . then pragmatism will logically call for a return to the classical curriculum.[16]

"Tough-minded" educators, to use William James's term, are fond of pointing out that Dewey himself was tough-minded, by digging out little gems like this from Dewey's writings: "The 'Three Rs' are at all times the tools for introduction into higher studies; they have to be mastered if further initiation is to occur." [17]

According to this view, the critics' charge that many of our national failures—our secondary position in the space race, the U-2 fiasco, our diplomatic frustrations around the world—result from the transformation of the schools into instruments of progressive education is unfactual and illogical. As Sidney Hook has passionately stated,

> If education is relevant to this question [of national failure], we must look to the education of those in strategic places and command posts. Have those who have neglected the needs of scientific military defense from Pearl Harbor to the present, who have systematically neglected the opportunities for democratic ideological warfare, who have failed to make the United States the leader of the world movement for colonial liberation—have all those politicians, generals and admirals been brought up on progressive education, or in the spirit of Dewey's educational philosophy? [18]

As Hook notes, if those who failed to make the decision to orbit early, or if those who made other unfortunate decisions concerning national policy, are over fifty years of age, they went to school before Dewey's influence was widely felt in American education. Thus, if education is the cause of national failure, it is the traditional educational philosophy that guided the education of an earlier generation that is at fault. As Hook suggests, if the members of what C. Wright Mills has called "the power elite" went to West Point or Annapolis (as so many did), they can hardly be said to have suffered from a progressive education. But if the front line GIs who held at Bastogne and Guadalcanal were between 18 and 25, many may claim benefit from the progressive education of the '30s.

RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE OF EDUCATION

Defenses such as these against criticism of public education are part of the game of sticks and stones Americans play. Their weakness is that they

[16] Commager, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
[17] John Dewey, *Education and the Social Order* (New York: League for Industrial Democracy, 1936), p. 3.
[18] Sidney Hook, "John Dewey: His Philosophy of Education and Its Critics," *New Leader* (November 2, 1959 [Section Two]), p. 5.

assume that acceptance of progressive educational practices logically presupposes the acceptance of Dewey's pragmatic philosophy, and that support of the more traditional and conservative educational practices presupposes acceptance of a traditional educational philosophy. It is almost universally agreed that the practical conduct of education is a *logical* consequence of some philosophy of education, and that changing the day-to-day conduct of our schools requires first changing the philosophy of education adopted by the schools. This is an important assumption, one that deserves analysis.

Educational philosophy *does* guide educational policy—there is an organic connection between philosophy and education. Yet it must be noted that *there is no strictly logical* connection between philosophy and practice in education, as has been clearly pointed out elsewhere.[19] As one of America's foremost scholars has written:

> Although there is an organic connection in Dewey's own thinking between his philosophical ideas and his educational proposals, they are not related as logical premise to logical conclusion. Dewey, of course, believed that the soundness of his proposals constituted some evidence that his philosophic method was fruitful. But he never contended that, before one could determine whether or not the proposals were sound, one antecedently had to accept pragmatism.[20]

In other words, there is no formal, logical way by which teachers or administrators may deduce specific educational policies or practices from abstract metaphysical, epistemological, or axiological premises. Therefore, those who maintain that progresssive education is the only, necessary, and logical outgrowth of pragmatism are as mistaken as those who maintain that the more traditional forms of education are the only, necessary and logical consequences of the more traditional forms of philosophy.

Whence comes progressive education, then? Clearly it did not appear full grown, like Eve; clearly it has some philosophic underpinnings; and if we are to criticize or defend those elements of contemporary education that may be "progressive," we must have a rather precise idea of just what is meant by the term "progressive education."

THE PHILOSOPHIC BASE OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

THE MEANING OF PROGRESS

A primitive sense of logic suggests at least this: the meaning of "progressive education" depends on the meaning assigned to the word "progress"

[19] Hobert W. Burns, "The Logic of the 'Educational Implication,'" *Educational Theory*, XII, 1 (January 1962), 53–63.

[20] Sidney Hook, *Modern Education and Its Critics* (Oneonta, N. Y.: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1954), p. 7.

—and an analysis of the concept of progress is the proper approach to the problem. Further, that same primitive sense of logic suggests that, whatever else the concept of progress may suggest, it incorporates at least the ideas of *change* and *direction*. Progress implies movement and movement involves change. Further, movement is always change in some direction. To affirm that one can progress without at the same time changing seems contradictory. And to affirm that to change in any way is to progress (to confuse means with ends) is to say that a given situation is the worst of all possible situations and any change is an improvement. Most would assume that while some changes are progressive others are regressive. *Some* changes, then, constitute progress while others do not. But in any case, for purposes of analysis, it seems quite clear that the concept of progress inevitably involves the ideas of change and direction; and from this we can identify the most elementary definition of progress possible: *progress is change in a desirable direction.*

The word "desirable" in this preliminary definition indicates that there is an axiological, or value, element, implicit in the concept of progress. Thus we see that the concept of *meliorism*—the comparative idea of "changes for the better"—plays an integral role in the concept of progress. However, this definition gives us no information as to which changes in which directions are to be desired at what times under which circumstances. Only when we have adduced the criteria—and axiological criteria
62 they will be—to give us a sense of desirable directions will we grasp the full meaning of "progress." And, as the concept "progress" is used as a modifier in the term "progressive education," the desirable directions will necessarily refer to the means and ends of education.

Although it has been done elsewhere in more depth and with more sophistication,[21] we will outline here a brief philosophic history of the ideas of change and progress to give greater understanding of the controversy over progressive education. If only to indicate that our educational system and its problems are bound by our cultural heritage, let us open this short history with our favorite ancestors, the ancient Greeks.

THE GRECIAN ERA

The pre-Socratics, so far as the remaining fragments of their thoughts reveal, generally considered change to be characteristic of reality; indeed, for some, reality was change and change was reality. Anaximander saw reality as changing and pluralistic; Xenophanes felt that change was the one true constant in reality; Protagoras argued that nothing is fixed and final; and Heraclitus, the fabled "philosopher of change," is still quoted by

[21] *Cf.* John S. Brubacher, "A Proposal for Judging What Is and What Is Not Progressive Education," *School and Society*, XLVIII, 1243 (October 22, 1938), 509–19; and Lawrence G. Thomas, "The Meaning of Progress in Progressive Education," *Educational Administration and Supervision*, vol. XXXII (October 1946), pp. 385–400.

modern philosophers who affirm that all things are in flux. Indeed, to the careful observer of any phenomenon the fact of continual change becomes overwhelmingly clear. Philosophers usually look beyond events when they search for something unchanging and what is looked beyond long enough becomes easier to overlook entirely.

These early theories of change did not, to be sure, come to characterize Greek thought—else the very nature of Western philosophy and therefore American education might today be vastly different. Plato negated the reality of change, and Aristotle encapsulated change in a changeless cycle of reality. So, owing partially to the lack of pre-Socratic writings and partially to Plato's beautiful language and Aristotle's persuasive logic, the particular segment of Greek thought we call "Greek Philosophy" considered change a superficial and unwelcome cover that obscured reality. To penetrate beyond "appearances," where change was obvious, they sought to discover regions where nothing changed.

Plato, under the influence of Socrates and drawn to the conceptually perfect universe that his mind struggled to conceive, even went so far as to deny the reality of change by insisting that whatever changed was merely apparent, or phenomenological, hence unreal, while the truly real could not change because it had to be perfect, fixed, and final. Plato's student, Aristotle, could not quite agree that change was unreal or impossible for, as an empiricist, he had the testimony of his senses that changes occurred even in living things and, as a rationalist, he had the logic of his reason to confirm the reality of such changes. Nor, however, could he bring himself to reaffirm the pre-Socratic conceptions of change as the true reality and thus completely deny the teachings of his master. So Aristotle compromised by admitting the reality of physical change and growth and then encapsulated it in metaphysics by insisting that change occurred only within changeless cycles so that, to illustrate, reality was granted to the changes represented in the natural metamorphoses of acorn to oak tree to acorn, but the ultimate reality was in the changeless, repetitive cycle of acorn-to-oak-to-acorn. By expanding his concept to include a repetitive cycle to be viewed as a single unit he accounted for change within an unchanging framework. As Brubacher says, consider

> . . . the acorn which has recently fallen from its mother oak. If, fortunately, it becomes covered with soil and receives an appropriate amount of moisture and warm sunlight, it will in the course of time germinate and push a shoot above the soil. In the further course of time, it will become a young sapling. Still later it will grow into a mature oak and itself have acorns which will fall to the ground to grow into yet other oaks. Here is a cycle of growth. There is change within the cycle, but the cycle itself never changes. There is no danger that the acorn will become an elm. The oak cycle is a complete and unchanging cycle, although inside the cycle there is a well-ordered change.[22]

[22] Brubacher, *loc. cit.*

For Aristotle, then, physical change was real; but he could not conceive of change by chance, since he believed all movement must be by design and tending toward some fixed, predetermined end existing within the changeless cycles of reality.

The view that therefore came to represent Greek thought can be summarized in these words:

> . . . changes in living things are orderly; they are cumulative; they tend constantly in one direction. . . . In living beings, changes do not happen as they seem to happen elsewhere, any which way; the earlier changes are regulated in view of later results. This progressive organization does not cease till there is achieved a true final term, a *telos*, a completed and perfected end.[23]

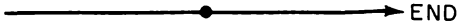
According to this view immutability and stability are the essential components of reality, and what actually changes is something less than real, for the truly real is represented by teleological end points, be they conceptual atoms called essences or universals. Change thus came to mean, for the post-Socratic Greeks, little more than the ebb and flow of events on the surface of the fixed and regular cycles of ultimate reality. As Thomas succinctly stated, "the idea of progress, as we think of the term, was simply not present in Greek thought." [24] This idea of change without progress, of change as merely the ebb and flow of natural events in metaphysically fixed patterns resembles the turning of a wheel—however fast it turns the form remains the same. While physical change is constant no progress is made, since change is only the regular and repetitious movement from zenith (oak) to nadir (acorn). Because they sought fixed patterns beyond observable events, the ancient Greeks cared as little about the direction of change among appearances as we might care about the sequence of events in a dream. Though Aristotle spent much of his life describing the details of biological specimens he fitted his accounts of their makeup to a static though cyclical view of life within a fixed framework from earth, air, fire, and water at the base to the unmoved mover on top.

THE CHRISTIAN ERA

With the birth of Christ and the development of Christianity some few hundred years later, the Platonic idea of an immutable, immortal world of reality beyond the mutable, mortal world of appearance and the Aristotelian idea of teleological ends were amended to provide the intellectual substance for the idea that fruitless change on earth could be arranged in a chain that led to the final end of other-world immortality. The concept of change, as reworked by the primitive Christianity of Peter, Paul, and others, as well as the more formalized Christianity of Augustine, Aquinas,

[23] John Dewey, *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1910), p. 4.
[24] Thomas, *loc. cit.*

and others took on a *directional* characteristic. Without doubt one of the great Christian improvements over Greek thought was the idea that change need not be considered only aimless movements among appearances, but that meaningful change toward a fixed and real end was possible and desirable. Although the end and benefit of such change resided not in this but in a later life, and no man could guarantee which earthly changes might represent progress toward the desired end, the Christian metaphysic and the Christian ethic did provide all the ingredients necessary to a theory of progress: change, direction, and meliorism. Indeed, given that man on earth hopes to achieve salvation in part by his own efforts, the concept of progress becomes indispensable. This theory of change can be called the "straight-line theory," and illustrated thus:



where the mid-point represents a set of presently existing place-time conditions, where the end is the desired, fixed goal, and where "progress" is defined as change or movement in the direction of the end; and, conversely, movement in any other direction toward any other end is regressive. The concept of earthly change as real and significant thus emerged, and with it came a new word: "progress." As its etymology reveals, "progress" appeared on the intellectual scene around 1475.[25] It began simply enough as a linear concept in a rather Euclidean setting since society seemed a plane as flat as the earth. With the expansion of the concept of society beyond two dimensional models the suspicion grew that the shortest path between points might not be a straight line. The reality of change was thus incorporated into the Christian metaphysic, and progress came to represent changes or movements toward certain fixed and perfect ends. The nature of those ends was defined by criteria laid down by the prophets and priests of Christianity, and their perfection was guaranteed by supernatural authority. Like early physicist who dealt with ideal gases, early social theorists preferred their society perfectable along ideal dimensions of absolute authority, infallible sources, and certainty. Consequently, this Greco-Christian concept of change and progress was incorporated into the larger metaphysical pattern of the changeless and the ultimately perfect, so that the Aristotelian prototype was not fundamentally altered. The ultimately "real" of Greek thought had become the Christian supernatural, still fixed, final, and eternal. In the switch, however, the tentativeness of Plato's search for the first glimpse of the idea gave way to the conviction of those who had heard the last word.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Because they rooted the ends and benefits of progress in an afterlife that denigrated the meaningfulness of earthly change, these early theories of progress could not survive the intellectual ferment brought on by the

[25] *Cf.* C. T. Onions, ed., *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles,* rev. ed. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1955), pp. 1594–95.

Reformation, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. For a stoic acceptance of the inevitability of appearances, the Christians had substituted the will to control change. Under the stimulant of post-Reformation thought, thought now freed from a church-imposed interpretation of the Aristotelian frame of reference, the belief arose that the improvement of the human condition need not await our arrival at an afterlife but might well be realized on this planet in a temporal future if the fixed ideals could be tempered. For this the two dimensional analyses—body and soul, good and evil, saved and damned, the just and the perverse—had to give way to more complex maps.

The forward strides taken by physical science, especially through the works of Galileo and Bacon which led to the development of experimental science, gave social scientists an analogue and a model. Men like Condorcet, Diderot, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire undertook to discover "the natural laws of society and social organization" that must reside in the natural order of things, just as the laws of physical science resided in the natural order of things. Their search convinced them that, among other things, *progress* was one of the important natural social laws. Progress took on a concreteness, inevitability, and force comparable to a Newtonian conception of gravity. It was reified. But in the process it was relocated. Instead of being a master plan imposed by the Diety it became an elastic force woven into the waistband of nature.

According to this view, earthly changes could and do lead to earthly improvements in the human condition, since such progress is an inherent part of the natural order of the universe. The concept of progress was elevated to the status of a natural law, a law that vouchsafed for the continual improvement of life on this planet and the eventual perfectability of man. A law of gravity ordained how bodies must fall, and a law of progress ordained how men must rise.

While the idea of progress as a natural law is clearly but a modification of the "straight-line" theory of progress, it represents an important modification because many—if not all—of the ends of change and progress were seen to be temporal and earthly. In other words, the changing conditions of life might well become better—better in the here-and-now as well as the there-and-later. Progress brought Heaven "down to earth."

The idea that deliberate human effort might change and improve human environing conditions slowly throttled the earlier idea that human suffering, poverty, illness, and dawn-to-dusk labor were part of God's plan to test our fitness for eventual residence in His mansion. Even stripped of divine approval the necessity for suffering held much appeal, as the works of Malthus indicate. Out of this metamorphosis of the Greco-Christian conception of progress arose several new concepts of progress. Perhaps the most notable was that of the German social scientist Karl Marx who, drawing upon the metaphysical work of Georg Hegel, formulated a theory of change and progress called dialectical materialism.

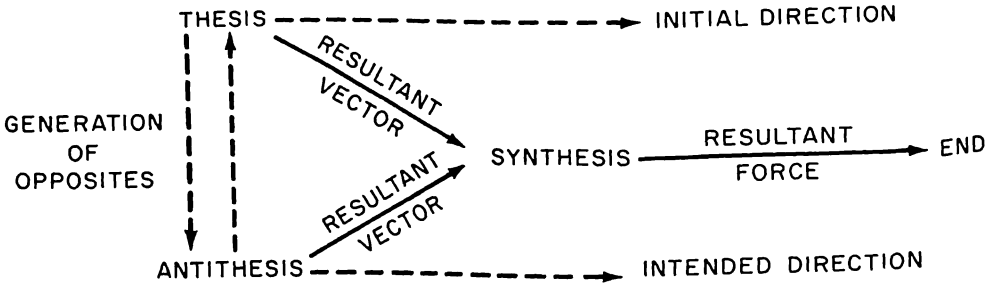
In its simplest form the dialectic is a physical analysis of what happens in argumentation on the grand scale of the combat among ideas. Three principles are involved: (1) the generation of opposites, (2) the vector-like force of ideas, and (3) the balanced resolution of vectors. These are displayed in the diagram on page 68. Stated nakedly, the dialectic is the inevitable conflict among ideas. In the heat of battle, both combatants suffer mortal wounds which alter them dramatically, so that from the last breath of each a new warrior is born, fully panoplied for battle under their joint crests.

According to Hegel, change and progress result from and can be explained by a dialectical logic. Put simply, the dialectic is represented by some forward-moving process involving some present, currently happening state of affairs which is called the *thesis*. Out of the thesis, any current situation, arises a difficulty or a contradiction, which is called the *antithesis*. Between the thesis and the antithesis there is a struggle or a conflict, and the ultimate resolution of this conflict is called the *synthesis*. According to the dialectic, neither the thesis nor the antithesis "wins" the contest, for the synthesis represents elements of both thesis and antithesis merged in some *new* situation, some *new* thesis—and out of this new thesis grows an antithesis, resulting in yet another synthesis, which becomes yet another new thesis. This is the way Hegel viewed change and progress—much as Newton reduced the force of gravity to a formula. Rather than merely replacing black and white with shades of grey Hegel attacked the very color blindness of two dimensional models in which force met force and might made right.

Seizing upon the dialectic as method, but rejecting Hegelian content (for Hegel, an idealistic philosopher, made ideas the subject matter of change and progress), Marx made materialism the content—and gave us a theory of progress called dialectical materialism. For Marx the economic thesis of feudalism yielded its own antithesis, which resulted in a synthesis —and new thesis—called mercantile capitalism; in turn, capitalism has produced a series of contradictions which will result in socialism, the next synthesis-thesis; and this in turn will yield to the ultimate thesis, pure communism. In less abstract terms, Marx says that no significant change or progress can be made unless and until the profit system of capitalism, which is based on the economic exploitation of workers, can be replaced by society-wide ownership of economic goods; that is the precondition of progress, and communism will represent the terminal point of economic progress when there will be neither exploiters nor exploited in the one-class —the "working-owning class"—society. Abstractly, by using the dialectical formula and assessing the strength of each thesis and antithesis as well as the precise direction of each, one can plot progress as a series of vectors to the ultimate synthesis.

The vectors of the dialectic yield its directional characteristic: gradually

moves toward some antecedently established, fixed goal, and progress is measured by reference to vibrations which shift toward that end.



THE TRADITIONAL IDEA OF PROGRESS

The idea of progress, from the ancient Greeks up to and including Marx, has thus been distinguished by two beliefs: first, that progress consists of changes or motion in the direction of a final and fixed end; and second, that the absolute value of the end vouchsafes for the validity of the means used to reach it. Additionally, progress was seen as inevitable, for in the Greco-Christian formulation eventual arrival at the ends set is assured by God; in the formulations of Enlightenment philosophers, progress is part of nature and assured by natural law; in the Marxian formulation the give and take of the dialectic predicts and promises progress toward the fixed ends set by the course of history. In all these instances progress is closed-ended, with a terminal point fixed in advance and guaranteed by a force or power beyond, and independent of, human action. As Thomas recounts:

> . . . the idea [of progress] was placed in the classical forms of changeless patterns, so that up until the middle of the Nineteenth century the conception of progress had these characteristics:
> 1. Nothing is truly new under the sun; the apparently novel is just a recombination of the same changeless elements.
> 2. The proper ends of progress already exist in an ideal realm or in the mind of God.
> 3. Progress is inevitable eventually, but man can slow it down or speed it up.
> 4. Man's role is to discover the pre-established ends and free himself from his frailties in order to achieve these ends more directly and happily.
> 5. Man does not choose between competing goods, but between the pre-established good and the bad, between the right and the wrong.
> 6. A priesthood [be it Christian or Marxism] with special insight is required to inform the people what the proper ends of life and education are, and the laity will be wise to accept this authority and guide their activities accordingly.
> 7. In sum, progress consists of discovering and following a pre-established pattern or design toward externally-fixed ends.[26]

[26] Thomas, *loc. cit.*

In 1859 Charles Darwin published his first book on evolution and provided not only a contemporary alternative to the Marxist theory of change and progress, as then unpublished, but offered, for the first time in over 2,000 years, a serious challenge to the Greco-Christian approach to progress. The old idea of changeless forms and fixed cycles and creation by God's executive fiat had to be stretched beyond the elastic limits of credulity to fit the facts of geology, biology, paleontology, and archeology adduced by Lyle, Linnaeus, Darwin, Mendeleev, and others. As Brubacher notes:

> In the classical and Christian traditions each cycle, or eternal prototype of reality, required a separate act of creation [since change, especially evolutionary change was inadmissible]. Darwin offered the suggestion that possibly these cycles of ordered change might have a natural origin, that cycles of ordered change grow out of each other. The implication of Darwin's theory of evolution was that not only was there change within the cycle, but that the cycle itself might change.[27]

If this be true, if the modern sciences built on Darwinian findings are not the work of the devil trying to delude us, then nothing is permanently fixed, or final, or ultimate and perfect as the Aristotelian and Christian conceptions would have us believe; nor is there any good reason to assert, as do Marxists, that evolution has an impassable limit represented by a perfected man in a perfected society, as supposedly guaranteed by the dialectic of history. Rather, variances, mutations, aberrations, and accidents are as real and as meaningful as the regular, the fixed, and the routine. Change becomes the essence of reality—change that does not, naturally or supernaturally, tend toward any given end. Linearity and finality cease to be part of the concept of progress. It became plausible to imagine embarking on a trip without a final destination yet designated. Travelling or adventure replaced the duty of a pilgrimage.

The impact of Darwinian thought on the concept of progress can not be overstated: if all things are in a state of change, if flux is the essential characteristic of existence and reality, then the ends of life—or of education—can not be fixed and final. If the ends of life and education are not assured beforehand by God, or by "natural social law," or by the historical dialectic, or by the nature of the species, then it can only follow that man and society inherit the obligation to create their own purposes, their own ends—and *progress becomes contingent upon man.* Man, as the existentialists put it, is condemned to be free. Thomas again provides a succinct summary of the conception of progress that grew out of Darwin's findings:

1. The novel is genuinely new, not merely the revelation of an antecedently complete and perfected reality.

[27] Brubacher, *loc. cit.*

2. The proper ends of life do not exist timelessly, waiting to be discovered by a priesthood [again be it Christian or Marxian], but must be constructed out of the present circumstances by everyone involved.
3. All values or ends have an instrumental quality, and no end is fixed or final.
4. Progress is contingent, having no general formula, and no one can be sure that this dynamic world is tending in any certain or preestablished direction.
5. In short, progress is experimental, improving the adaptation of human living to changing conditions.[28]

According to this dynamic theory of progress, the modifiability of socially created ends provides for shifts in direction as conditions change, so that *progress is always specific and related to some desired end-in-view*. Since it is open-ended, with ends changing as circumstances change, there can be no general formula for progress; man must create, out of the unrealized potentials at his command, both his ends and his means. Progress therefore depends on man and his condition, his hopes and his fears, his needs and his desires. Man invents his own goals as surely as he invented his own language. Given the social animal man, language evolves. Given the linguistic animal social man, stated goals evolve. Goal seeking behavior comes late in the history of consciousness.

Thus, the philosophic, not the historical, meaning of "progressive education" depends on the definition attached to the concept of progress. As we have seen, there is no "one" or "correct" philosophic meaning of progress; rather there are at least two major positions, each stemming from a strong philosophic background, and each varying greatly as to the nature of progress, for each varies greatly concerning the status of ends.

To insist, as does Mortimer J. Adler, that "the *ultimate* ends of education are the same for all men at all times and everywhere" [29] is to argue that there are at least some ends of life—and, therefore, of education—that are fixed and final. It is also to suggest that, although we speak of progress, the essential nature of life has not really changed very much in ways that matter over 3,000 years. On this basis progress in education is represented by those activities or undertakings or changes that are harmonious with and lead to eternal verities and ultimate values. And as a practical matter, preparation for living, the essential aspects of it, remains basically much the same from culture to culture and man to man.

To deny that ends are universally binding upon all men and to insist

[28] Thomas, *loc. cit.*

[29] Mortimer J. Adler, "In Defense of the Philosophy of Education," in Nelson B. Henry, ed., *Philosophies of Education*, Forty-First Yearbook, Part I, National Society for the Study of Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 221.

that the tenure of an end may run from a week to a millennium, is to argue that *no* end is immutable and, therefore, that all of the ends of life and education grow out of the activities of living and educating and are consequently contingent upon specific sets of time, place, cultural conditions, and even peculiar circumstances. According to this view ends are *relative*, taking their form and substance from the varieties of human experience. Progress in education is here represented by those activities or changes that direct the course of subsequent experiences toward specified and desired objectives. These are not objectives declared by some authority *to be desirable*, but rather what men of their own accord desire or need. On this basis progress in education, as Brubacher has observed, cannot be defined wholesale, for it is specific and particularistic, contingent upon the nature of specific educational activities, conducted at specific times and places for specifiable purposes. Yet in general terms it can be said, with Dewey, that progressive education involves "that reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience." [30] Man's first and last obligation is to serve men.

If by "progressive education" we mean that body of educational thought that found its intellectual seeds in the facts of evolution produced by Darwin and nourished in the fertile mind of John Dewey, then the *differentia* of progressive education is that it views change and chance as empirical realities and defines progress in education in terms of producing men and societies that are increasingly able to be self-directive. Change and chance are indispensable ingredients in the notion of choice, and it is only through choices made by individuals that anything called progress ensues. By their *choices* men define existence.

The questions surrounding progressive education are, we can conclude, essentially axiological, because education is inescapably a value-laden activity. The many practical questions about the ends and means of education —for example, should prayers be said in the school? Is "social promotion" desirable? Should driver training be in the curriculum?—these questions are fully understood only in an axiological context, for the range of possible answers will be determined by one's theory of value. But which theory of value? And what are the issues that divide one theory from another?

THE PHILOSOPHIC ISSUE

ARE VALUES ABSOLUTE OR RELATIVE?

The major issue in axiological debate concerns the source and status of values. Are all values social creations and therefore relative to human culture? Or are some the discovery of transcendental Will and therefore

[30] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916), pp. 89–90.

absolute? The responses to this question separate relativist from absolutist, naturalist from supernaturalist.

J. Donald Butler defines the philosophic issue in these terms:

> What is the status of values in existence? Are all values purely transient, as some say, and exist only because there is some human sentiment subject who enjoys them? And will all values cease to be when mankind has passed from the scene, or has blasted himself out of existence by his achievements in nuclear physics? Or are there some values which are permanent and abiding? Are there values which exist independently of man and are good and to be desired whether man desires and possesses them or not? If there are such abiding values, do they exist, as it were, under their own power, as Platonic ideas are supposed to exist . . . Or instead, do these abiding values have permanence because they are attributes or qualities of character which God has, and are of, and dependent upon, One Being alone who has ultimate existence? [31]

Here the issue of absolute versus relative values is extended to include the correlative question as to the *source* of values: are the values that guide life and education man-made, God-given, or both? The resolution of questions about the source and status of values will have a great impact upon education for, as Philip H. Phenix says,

> The problem of the status of values is crucial in education. If values have no more standing than individual taste, then directing the development of persons becomes a matter of arbitrary imposition by some persons on others. If values are rooted in society, then personal development must be subjected to group decisions. If there is a rational natural law of values, reason becomes sovereign over individuals and groups in the process of guiding growth. If values have their sanction in God, there are resources and judgments for education which lie beyond individuals, groups, and perhaps even beyond human rationality.[32]

It takes no great logician to see that the status of values in some sense depends on their source. If all values are socially created and hence inescapably related to man and his problems, then it follows that values are relative to and contingent upon man and his society, and that they will be modified or changed as human and social conditions alter. But if some values are God-created and hence transcendent of man and his problems, then it follows that such values are absolute and forever binding upon all men and societies, and that they are not subject to modification or change.

Time magazine, although not especially noted for its philosophic significance, stated the issue briefly and bluntly once by asking, "Is there an absolute distinction between right and wrong? Or are moral laws really a matter of changing times, changing customs?" [33]

[31] J. Donald Butler, *Four Philosophies*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1957), p. 521.

[32] Philip H. Phenix, *Philosophy of Education* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1958), p. 551.

[33] "Chief Justice on Morality," *Time* (July 23, 1951), pp. 67–68.

The basic case for absolutism in value theory is put by Butler who, as an idealist, believes that "some values have the status of ultimate existence. Such values have this status not because they are independent realities [as some idealists, for example Plato, maintain], but because they are in and of the nature of God, who alone has ultimate and absolute existence." [34] For some idealists, then, absolute values exist because God exists and He is the personification of absolute existence; and man comes to know these values as he comes to know his God—through the idealists' epistemic of reason combined with intuition for, as Herman H. Horne argued, only logical thought coupled with a spirit attuned to the divine can come to know the values that exist in the moral order that is independent of man.[35] In this "tuning fork theory" of values, where man and God vibrate in harmony, lies an aesthetic element central in valuation even among the Platonic Greeks. It takes appeals to right reason forever beyond the reach of provable logic.

Other idealists, while agreeing that some values are absolute and thus binding upon all men, root value more in spiritual man than in a personal God. Robert Ulich, for instance, writes that

> . . . we are justified in supposing that our ethical behavior has its origin not in arbitrary human decisions or in isolated desires—such as the will to power, competition, or fear on the one hand, or more spiritual and ideal products of the mind on the other hand—but in ultimate energies which work at the bottom of our total existence.[36]

How do we know this? Again the path to such knowledge leads us to a harmonic blend of reason and intuition.

Expressing just as strong an absolutistic viewpoint in value theory, and arguing that absolute values are the only true and reliable guides to the educational endeavor, Redden and Ryan note that, from a Thomistic viewpoint,

> The final evaluation of education, its data and first principles, must be founded on a scale of values. Now, values and the order assigned to values flow from a true [i.e., Catholic] philosophy of life. Values are deduced from the application of the fundamental principles of the true philosophy to human life and conduct. . . . No system of education built solely on natural sources can ever reach a complete and satisfactory explanation of the nature of man, his origin, and his destiny. The full light of positive revelation thrown on man's nature and destiny is needed, if man is to arrive at a complete and certain knowledge of himself. Such

[34] Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 566.
[35] Herman H. Horne, *The Philosophy of Education* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1935).
[36] Robert Ulich, *Philosophy of Education* (New York: American Book Company, 1961), pp. 53–54.

knowledge must be free from the errors and limitations of human reasoning.[37]

Here a similarity and a difference is to be noted between idealism and Thomism. The similarity is that both firmly state that the proper conduct of education depends on the discovery of an absolute set of values which transcend the human animal and his social arrangements. The difference lies in how these absolute values are identified. The idealist is content to rely upon the human mind, believing that if it is properly tuned to a divine mind it can achieve intuitive knowledge of perfect value. The Thomist however, while willing to give full credit to the achievements of human rationality, in the end doubts the ability of reason alone, however tuned, to yield and confirm such powerful knowledge, and therefore insists that only when we rely upon supernatural revelation can we feel perfectly sure that we have indeed discovered those absolute values that are God's own magnificent creation. For the Thomist, certain knowledge of absolute value is God's gift to man. Rather than have man search for God's wavelength, the Thomist has God broadcasting on man's frequency.

In fine, the "traditional" view is that there are at least some values, some ends, whose source transcends man and society, and these values are therefore

—*eternal*, because their life-span is as infinite as that of their Creator, who has neither beginning nor end;
—*immutable*, because they do not change with the variable circumstances of time, place, or man;
—*antecedent*, because their existence precedes the appearance of man in the universe, and thus they are;
—*independent* of man, not only because they antecede man and therefore could not depend on him, but because their validity is sanctioned by the transcendental and is in no way altered by man's knowledge or ignorance, acceptance or rejection, of them;
—*absolute*, because they are relevant (but not relative) to any and all sets of spatial, temporal, and human conditions;
—*a priori*, because knowledge of their existence and validity is in no way dependent on or conditioned by human reason or experience.

According to this view the proper ends of life, and therefore of education, being inherent in the very nature of the universe, morally obligate man to discover, recognize, and accept the supremacy of such values and to regulate his behavior in conformity with them—for morality can be defined in no other terms than those of *conformity to absolute values*. When God extends order there can be no question that it is a necessary extension. Conformity thus becomes synonymous with congruence between behavior and fixed principle. Man inhabits a moral monarchy and should be happy

[37] John D. Redden and Francis A. Ryan, *A Catholic Philosophy of Education* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1942), pp. 48, 49.

serving his master. The security of a supreme guardian must be weighed against the false security of moral enslavement. Rival meanings of freedom are at stake.

VALUES AS RELATIVE

The instrumental, or pragmatic, point of view contrasts sharply with the transcendental, for it places value in a social rather than a metaphysical frame of reference. This is to say, first and most importantly, that the ordinary experiences of ordinary men in day-to-day circumstances provide the necessary and sufficient ground for the construction of values to guide our lives and our educational activities. This attitude is reflected in Dewey's passionate belief that men should not—indeed, must not—ignore experience as the source of all value:

> The [metaphysical] idea of the work of philosophy rests upon distrust of the capacity of experience to generate fundamental values and to direct deliberate effort in behalf of their realization. This distrust involves lack of loyalty to practical intelligence, substituting in its place dependence upon so-called *a priori* intuitions and upon an alleged faculty of pure Reason that grasps absolute non-empirical truth. . . . Philosophy [should] not involve a flight and escape to that which is beyond experience, personal and social. Everyday homely objects and the occupations of everyday life are possessed of potentialities that, under the guidance of deliberate and systematic intelligence, will make life fuller, richer, and more unified.[38]

Since values are not to be found ready-made in the order of things, man must create his own values out of the ingredients of human experience. On the basis of human experience—past, present, and desired future experiences—men do form interests that may become values, and men do put forth effort to realize these interests. How senseless to sign away man's greatest responsibility to an absentee landlord who, like Santa Claus, might not exist.

From the instrumental point of view, then, a value represents an interest that has been subjected to the critical scrutiny of human intelligence, adjudged to be an act or idea that will enrich the human community, and tested in the crucible of experience. Childs says that an instrumental "moral theory is grounded in the conviction that judgments about values —about that which should have authority in human affairs—involve objective data which are open to significant test and evaluation," [39] and Dewey

[38] John Dewey, "The Determination of Ultimate Values or Aims Through Antecedent or A Priori Speculation or Through Pragmatic or Empirical Inquiry," in Guy M. Whipple, ed., *The Scientific Movement in Education*. Thirty-Seventh Yearbook, Part II, National Society for the Study of Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), p. 472.

[39] John L. Childs, *American Pragmatism and Education* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1956), p. 118.

affirms that ". . . *values are judgments about the conditions and results of experienced objects; judgments about that which should regulate the formation of our desires, affections and enjoyments.*" [40] Value becomes but a special case under "meaning" in a society credited with inventing language.

Put simply, the instrumentalist is affirming that the construction of values is a human task; that in the construction of values to guide our individual and social endeavors, we draw upon experience to formulate value hypotheses by reference to our needs and wants, desires and enjoyments; and that the final test of a value lies in whether it leads to a consummatory, even esthetic, experience—an experience in itself instrumental to other experiences that continuously extend, promote, and enrich the life of the individual and the human community. Put simply, the worth of an apple is tested in the tasting, and the worth of eating is tested in the health that makes further living, tasting, and testing possible. Man sets the standards of evaluation at all levels. He may set standards even where he has not yet had experience but these will be the most arbitrary and hence suspect.

In fine, the instrumental view is that values are human creations wrung from the tensions and problems of individual and collective experience. Values are both relative and relevant to their social source. Values are therefore:

—*temporal*, because their life-span is limited by the amount of time allotted to them by their human creators;
—*mutable*, because they change with the variable conditions of time, place, and man;
—*consequent*, because their existence followed the appearance of man in the universe, and thus they are;
—*dependent* on man, not only because they are man's creations but because their validity depends on man's continuing use and sanction of them;
—*relative*, because they grew out of, and only find their validity in, specific sets of spatial, temporal, and human environments;
—*a posteriori*, because knowledge of their validity is thoroughly dependent upon the results of the experimental test, thus a value judgment cannot be adjudged a value until after it satisfies the test of experience.

According to this view the proper ends of life, and therefore of education, being human creations deliberately constructed to guide and enrich life, place a moral obligation upon man to use his intelligence critically in formulating values and, having acted on his value judgments, to accept the consequences of his human authorship. Here morality is not defined in terms of conformity but in terms of critical thought before acting, the

[40] John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960), p. 265.

acceptance of responsibility after acting, the evaluation of consequences of the act as to whether or not it achieved what was expected of it, and finally, the overall assessment as to whether or not the thing achieved yielded the satisfaction previously ascribed to it as an object of desire. In this way man can systematically assess and rebuild his values. No man can ever assess all at once, nor can any man rebuild even the major part of his value inheritance in his entire lifetime. He can, however, rebuild some part of it. No part can be guaranteed immunity in advance.

Education becomes a way of taking a hand in what, heretofore, has gone on without conscious attention. Man is most moral when deliberately constructing his values. The purpose of life is to create purposes. Progress in creating purposes involves the minimization of random trial and error. Progressive education employs systematic experimentation in the making of choices so that the individual becomes skilled in setting and assessing his own purposes. In so doing he must consider as many dimensions of himself, his problems, his society, and his surroundings as possible. "Progress" is more complex than the Greco-Christian or Hegelian-Marxian models imagined. Its end is not salvation, material gain, or the classless society. Its end is its means: the unlocking of human potential. The adventure is in becoming not in being. Man's choice is to take a hand in his own becoming or to take a stick to those unlike himself. Unhappy with the majority whip of moral monarchism the progressives are eager to find out what will result from unrestrained becoming. The first step lies in a deep appreciation of the necessity for diversity that goes beyond mere tolerence of difference.

SUMMARY

A great deal of the current criticism of the American public school is based on a logic that runs as follows:

Premise: Contemporary public education is ineffective, or worse;

Premise: Contemporary education is "progressive education";

Premise: Progressive education, as manifested in contemporary educational practices, is the result of a pragmatic philosophy;

Conclusion: Pragmatism as a philosophy is responsible for the evils of contemporary public education; and in order to make true progress in education it is necessary to reformulate both the ends and the means of education.

An analysis of this logic reveals that the issue of "progressive" versus "traditional" education forces us into a review of the aims or goals of education, and thus—since aims are ends, and ends are values—it becomes clear that the debate about educational practices is a symptom of the debate about educational philosophies; in particular, it is a debate about the proper meaning of progress in education, for what is required is a clear definition of "progressive education."

In this philosophic search for a definition of progress we find a fairly common agreement on the ingredients of the formula for progress: change and direction, or change toward some end. But we find very little agreement about the nature of change or the status of the ends toward which change should move if it is to be called progress. The argument therefore escalates into axiological debate about the source and status of the values that will guide the educational endeavor—for if change is unreal and values are metaphysically determined and absolute then we will clearly want to educate in one way, but if change is real and values are socially created and relative then we will want to educate in another way.

Thus the meaning of progress in education depends on considerations about the nature of ends and means. If progress means change in desirable directions then the issue demands that desirable directions be stated.

In the traditional philosophic viewpoint progress is represented by the use of education as means to metaphysical ends; that is, where education is solely a means to fixed ends outside itself. Hence, desirable directions for education are set by metaphysically determined and supernaturally sanctioned ends, and progress in education—or a truly "progressive" education —would be characterized by those educational policies and practices (means) that are efficacious to fixed educational objectives (ends) drawn from an absolutistic theory of value. Here it becomes perfectly clear that education, if it is to be consistent with its metaphysical basis, should be theocentric. And for 2,000 years it has been.

According to the pragmatic viewpoint progress is represented by the increasing ability of individuals and societies to establish their own human and humanitarian goals (ends) by relying upon their past experiences and critical intelligence (means) to improve present and future experiences. Herein education, which signifies growth in the direction of increasing self-direction for individuals and societies, becomes its own end—which is only to say, in more philosophic terms, that ends and means are harmonious and inseparable, mutually flowing from and to each other so as to modify and redirect each other. Progress in education, or "progressive" education, would be characterized by those educational activities (means and ends) that increasingly enhance and extend our opportunities to become self-directive and therefore improve our abilities to direct the future course of experience, individual and common. This is clearly drawn from a relativistic theory of value and education, and if it is to be consistent with its social and cultural basis, should involve men in the positing, testing, and evaluation of means and ends by having them act upon choices made from an examination of their needs, wants, interests, and desires.

In fine, the issue of progress in education hinges on a theory of value. If the value theory asserts that the purposes or ends of life and education exist prior to mankind, and exert a metaphysical influence over the activities of mankind, then progress in education is best achieved by recogniz-

ing and admitting the compelling sanction possessed by such suprasocial values and regulating our behaviors, educational or otherwise, so as to conform to these absolute values. But if the value theory asserts that there is no such metaphysic in the universe or in life, but that there are many and multiple purposes that are relative to and contingent upon man since purposes are human creations, then progress in education is best represented by establishing conditions and institutions—educational and otherwise—that permit and encourage men individually to formulate purposes and to be guided by the forces and currents that rise as others about them form and evaluate purposes. Instead of being guided by something fixed called "man's purpose," they must be immersed in the froth and ferment of social forces as a swimmer is immersed in the ocean, where to form a purpose resembles raising your head to take a breath and a look around. When many swimmers band together to share their hunches as to which direction they should swim, even though they will remain in doubt about the possibilities of reaching an island, they increase the probabilities that they will be able to float and swim longer, since they can hold each other up from time to time. To teach reading and writing is like teaching swimming, it is an indispensable and necessary skill. But one swimmer in an ocean drowns quite quickly. The school must produce a society of swimmers who can stay afloat much longer than even the strongest individual can. Where they will swim or float to remains unknown. That even the whole group will eventually drown is probable. But that the group floats longer than any one member could alone, that is progress.

At Iolani the students either got an education from the available teachers, or they got none at all, and it was Blake's unique contribution to Hawaii that with his fierce mustaches and his outrageous insistence upon the niceties of English manners, he educated the Chinese. He made them speak a polished English, cursing them in pidgin when they didn't. He converted them to the Church of England, while he himself remained a Buddhist. . . . Above all, he treated them as if they were not Chinese; he acted as if they were entitled to run banks, or to be elected to the legislature or to own land. In these years there were many in Hawaii who looked apprehensively into the future and were frightened by what they saw. They did not want Chinese going to college or owning big companies . . . they sometimes grew panicky and talked of passing ridiculous laws. . . . What these frightened men should have done was much simpler: they should have shot Uliassutai Karakoram Blake.[1]

—James Michener

A hundred years ago a figure like Blake, a man of contradictions and unique talents, could help the downtrodden Chinese boys of Hawaii cross the terrible abyss that kept Orientals, so necessary as a labor force, prisoners of *haole* government, politics, management, and land ownership.

Using his own mind as a bridge, he equipped his students with an academic excellence and an

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acceptability in manners which unleashed talents that earned them positions and wealth, the only power that mattered in the struggle for control. Being well educated and cultured, as well as free from the existing social order, he reared an army of local talent which took up strategic positions in the economic and political wars that followed.

When the power of that academic talent became known, parents no longer let their children drop out of school; and once enlisted, most boys strove for academic excellence as a soldier strives for marksmanship. Though the Chinese community was then small, it was close knit, and minor victories could be readily seen. Above all in the struggle they had a Blake, a man fiercely committed both to academic excellence and to holding on to the boy who might drop out. Blake had to be strong enough not to be torn apart when the two moved in opposite directions, when academic standards could not be met by boys who tried.

Today American education needs a million Blakes, teachers with two unconflicting passions: the one for academic excellence stemming from command of their subject, the other for helping those students so hard-up (emotionally, intellectually, financially, socially, or culturally) that they are losing the hope required to finish their schooling. The teacher with such a balance of equal passions faces two temptations, for the love of academic excellence often carries with it an intellectual snobbery that breeds impatience with students who do not learn readily, while the love of students in difficulty often carries with it an anti-intellectual bias that drowns all hope of worthwhile achievement in a bath of sentimentality. American education today has many impatient intellectuals and many patient sentimentalists, but too few Blakes who combine both concerns. Had Blake been governed by either one or the other passion he would have failed.

However, to balance a commitment to academic excellence with a conviction of the worth of the potential dropout requires more than resolve and personal strength. It requires a philosophy of education that illuminates the points of apparent conflict and raises the teacher to a point of perspective where he can see both passions as part of a single plan. Above all, such a philosophy depends upon a realistic examination of both parts of the problem.

AN APPEAL FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Seeing that the Chinese in Hawaii could not beat the shipping, pineapple, and sugar establishment by direct assault, Blake equipped them with the tools and talents that made them indispensable and influential at the lower fringes of power where whites did not care to work. By seeming to "join 'em," the Chinese gained the leverage with which to open a wedge

[1] James A. Michener, *Hawaii* (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 499–500.

for their own. Given their ethnic solidarity and a foothold, they found the hope which made them struggle all the harder.

Today the invitation is out for the academically talented to join the scientific, engineering, business, professional, and advertising fraternities and to carry home their slice of the high standard of living. And those without the talents prized and paid for are told they ought to stay in school as long as possible—to get whatever *rubs* off because nothing else *pays off*. We are in a period of increasing academic emphasis throughout the public educational system; the successful student is the one with special talents for mastering what the school has to offer. Admiral Rickover expresses the dominant concern well when he writes:

> Our schools have done a fine job of making Americans out of motley groups of foreigners from all corners of the globe and doing it in record time. This job is finished. The schools must now tackle a different job. They must concentrate on bringing the intellectual power of each child to the highest possible level. Even the average child now needs almost as good an education as the average middle and upper-class child used to get in the college-preparatory schools. The talented child needs special schooling to move him rapidly through the period of absorbing knowledge into the period when his fine mind can turn this knowledge into new ideas, new discoveries, new ways of life. We need creative thinkers in the humanities no less than in the sciences.[2]

Schooling sets out the pool of knowledge and the talented student soaks it up like a dry sponge. Those filled with some other fluid must have it squeezed out so they can absorb what they should. Small talents, like small sponges, have limited capacities for absorption, and what teacher would waste his time trying to supersaturate a sponge merely because he hoped it could pick up a gallon when it can't possibly hold more than a pint? Public schools today are primarily for big sponges, not spongers.

True, there is growing awareness, among those who emphasize the academic talent of youth as the country's greatest untapped natural resource, that excellence must be extended to include more than mathematics, science, foreign language, and English composition. The Rockefeller Report *The Pursuit of Excellence*, makes this point clear:

> First, we must not make the mistake of adopting a narrow or constricting view of excellence. *Our conception of excellence must embrace many kinds of achievement at many levels.* There is no single scale or simple set of categories in terms of which to measure excellence. There is excellence in abstract intellectual activity, in art, in music, in managerial activities, in craftsmanship, in human relations, in technical work.[3]

[2] Hyman G. Rickover, *Education and Freedom* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1959), p. 31.

[3] From *Pursuit of Excellence: Education and the Future of America*, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Inc. Copyright © 1958 by Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Inc. (As it appears in *Prospect for America*. Copyright © 1961.) Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

Although the report shows genuine concern for raising the diversity of human talent to a high level of excellence, basically it accepts the school as it is, with minor revisions, and accepts society as it is with almost no change at all. The schools are for those who succeed in school, and since the school is a fine boot-camp for society at large those who have their talents honed to a fine sharp-edged excellence will have the best chance of keeping that excellence sharp through continued use beyond school. For this talented minority (whether it be calculated at the top 10 per cent or top 25 per cent in academic, intellectual, artistic, social, and technical ability), the university, the professions, advertising, the mass media salesmanship, and engineering provide doors to the marketplace where status, income, respect, and security go "to each according to his ability," more or less. For this talented minority there is a democracy of sorts:

> We can then insist, as we must, that democracy is not to be conceived as an invitation to share a common mediocrity but as a system that allows each to express and live up to the special excellence that is in him. We can then demand the best of our most gifted, most talented and most spirited youngsters.[4]

When this talented minority, rich with the rewards of the social system, looks out from the vantage point of business, professional, military, or mass media success, it is with satisfaction. Satisfied with themselves as self-made, imaginative, and atypical (within prescribed limits, of course) they have scorn for critics of the system. Indeed, the world looks beautiful from on high. Only the man who has climbed the mountain knows how beautiful the valley can look. Climb along with him, if you can. Of course it takes talent. For those who have it, the invitation is open. For those who don't have the full measure of the kinds of talents that "the system" needs, let them find a place outside it.

But what of those without a substantial measure of the talents this society rewards? Can they find another society? Not likely. Will the talented minority go out of its way to help build another society? Why should it? What about the schools and the problem of academic excellence? Just do a better job of putting an edge on the kinds of talents already proven useful. What about the student poorly endowed with or uninterested in cultivating those talents? The system is broad enough to use the full range of human talents, and each person has some one or another talent that can be brought to a high level of excellence. But for those so warped or underprivileged that they are without usable talent to be improved, the school has nothing to offer. The school cannot be expected to adapt to their peculiar needs. These students will drop out; and if they don't, they should be dropped. But since there is no escaping from the social system, they ought to know the odds against them.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

And when they realize how bleak their future is, most will come around—if not in time for the regular school to help them, then to be helped by vocational schools, work camps, or army training programs. So run the attitudes of the dominant majority.

The school career of the potential dropout is not a focus of concern among those who insist on high standards of excellence for the academically talented. For them the tragedy is the waste that occurs when those with recognized talent fail to achieve the highest level of excellence possible; for them the dropout is a serious problem, but a social, not an academic, one. The talented minority must not be underprivileged, and the men who defend the rights of the talented minority—the Rickovers, the Hutchins, the members of the Rockefeller report committee, and the Conants—see the student in their own image. *Talent has a right to excellence!* they say. And it does. But what of those with few talents, or with talents that are not those the social system rewards, or, if it is conceivable, with no talent? What do they deserve? What are the rights of the dropout or those in the process of dropping out? This brings in the view from the bottom—not so pretty as the one from on high.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD—THE DROPOUT

In Hawaii, Blake's Chinese lived in daily contact with each other. They had no federal relief for the unemployed and disabled to give them a sense of autonomy. In such a close-woven, interdependent community, whose members were imbued with the knowledge that if they did not help themselves no one would help them, a sense of urgent purpose and common opposition to the established power elite can work to keep many in school.

In contrast, among today's Negroes and Puerto Ricans, a sense of hopelessness coupled with repeated school failures makes school a place the child has to go to until he is sixteen, because the law demands it. Beyond that age, as a recent study of Connecticut high school students indicates, the drop-out rate took on the following pattern in 1956–57:

> At age 16 the first real difference between the races emerges. Since we found that 9% of all white pupils and 14% of all Negro pupils dropped out of high school in 1956–57, this would mean that over a four-year interval, if the rate remained constant, about 36% of the whites and 56% of the Negroes would have left school. . . . Thus, on the threshold of their careers a larger proportion of the Negroes than whites start with an initial handicap in lacking a high school diploma.[6]

Yet the concern is not merely with the drop-out rate among racial minorities. There is great concern with students who drop from school regardless of their ethnic, social, and intellectual background. Interesting

[6] Henry G. Stetler, *Comparative Study of Negro and White Dropouts in Selected Connecticut High Schools* (Hartford: Connecticut Commission on Civil Rights, 1959), p. 45.

enough, concern has been growing in a period when the drop-out rate has been declining. The *Statistical Abstracts of the United States* for 1962 offers data on school retention from which it can be calculated that since the end of World War II the senior high school drop-out rate has steadily declined, except for the years toward the end of the Korean War. In 1946 the drop-out rate for high school juniors and seniors was just over 58 per 1,000 students; in 1958 it had declined to 41.8 per 1,000. Yet in isolated pockets, such as Baltimore, Maryland, almost 85 per cent of the Negro students leave school before high school graduation.

The present anguish over the problem can be sensed in the U. S. Office of Education pamphlet titled *High School Drop Outs*, especially when it examines the full spectrum of school attendance:

> *A million boys and girls, young men and women, each year, make the wrong decision and drop out of school.* By doing so, they doom themselves.
> For these persons will have trouble finding work since they are able to compete only for the dwindling opportunities in unskilled labor. They are the last to be hired, receive the lowest pay, and are the first to be laid off. Frequently their jobs can be taken over by machines.
> Before the end of the decade 7½ million more will be added to the already staggering number of American citizens who are academically and vocationally unprepared for this challenge and the challenging age.
> *One out of every three young people in the fifth grade now drops out of school before high school graduation.*
> This is a 20th century tragedy.[7]

Indeed, there is cause for alarm. Dropouts, like death and taxes, will always be with us in one form or another. And there is every reason to believe the problem they pose will continue on about the same scale as long as conditions in society and in the school remain unchanged. As Paul Goodman reports:

> It seems that because of the propaganda and cajolery of President Kennedy's campaign many "dropouts" were returning to school—fine—but the considered judgment of the man from the NEA was that unless there was a change 75 to 90 percent would drop out again. This time it would be disastrous; a second failure, after a deliberate choice; humiliation added to hopelessness; a sure push into juvenile delinquency.[8]

Though there should be alarm whenever talent goes to waste, the kind of moral indignation that so many politicians and business leaders express on the subject of dropouts seems somewhat misdirected. Those who have succeeded in, and profited from, the existing social and economic arrange-

[7] U. S. Office of Education, *High School Dropouts* (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964).
[8] Paul Goodman, "Extreme Situation," *The New Republic* 149:7 (October 19, 1963).

ments too frequently look on the child who drops out of school as a piece of personal property that has given disappointing returns on their investment. It is easy to imagine a slave owner's disappointment when he finds he has paid more for a field hand than he is worth. Though no one can afford to put his case in such stark terms today, a governor of Illinois came as close to it as anyone could dare when he said to a group of businessmen in 1962, "The drop-out who remains untrained, unskilled, forgotten, will never develop the earning power to purchase the products our industry produces, and this, in itself, poses a real threat to our total economy." [9]

Behind the "show" of concern, behind the benevolence, behind the condescension, behind the congeniality of the politician and his businessman audience, the slave-owner mentality still lurks. The boy must play his part on the team of earners who spend to buy so industry can produce and advertise to convince him that he needs soap—not to keep clean, but to suppress his animal odors the better to hold his job to earn to buy, and so on. In short, most people who express concern seem to agree that the reasons the child should stay in school are fundamentally economic. Even the U. S. Office of Education offers its most persuasive argument for staying in school in these terms: "On the average, a high school graduate during his working lifetime, beginning at age 18, earns $46,000 more than a high school dropout; $76,000 more than a grade school graduate." [10] Never an intimation that those whose social, economic and talent position equips them to earn more tend to stay in school longer. Always the reverse: if you stay in school longer you will earn more. Teachers, parents, employers, political leaders, and sociologists are quick to look for economic reasons why children should not drop out from school, and slow to grasp the unpleasant possibility that, as things now exist, leaving or staying may be quite beyond the choice of the individual. Indeed, for all the doom and tragedy that those who have succeeded in the present social and economic situation foresee, their understanding of the problem seldom rises above pity for the youngster—the kind of pity a man might feel for the sightless because they were born to a world without color or form as we know it. And pity helps not at all.

Those who look at the dropout problem, like those who are concerned with academic excellence, almost always see it in terms of adjusting the student to the needs of society as it now exists. Paul Goodman indicates how this outlook pervades even the view of social scientists, who are now

> . . . so accustomed to the highly organized and by-and-large smoothly

[9] Quoted in Ruth Masser, ed., "Future Employment and the School Dropout," *Public Aid in Illinois*, XXIX: 1 (March 1962), Chicago: State of Illinois Labor Bulletin, p. 2.

[10] U. S. Office of Education, *loc. cit.*

> running society that they have begun to think that "social animal" means "harmoniously belonging." They do not like to think that fighting and dissenting are proper social functions, nor that rebellion or initiating fundamental change is a social function. Rather, if something does not run smoothly, they say it has been improperly socialized, there has been a failure in communication. . . . Nevertheless, we see groups of boys and young men disaffected from the dominant society. The young men are Angry and Beat. The boys are Juvenile Delinquents. These groups are not small, and they will grow larger. Certainly they are suffering. Demonstrably they are not getting enough out of our wealth and civilization. They are not growing up to full capacity. They are failing to assimilate much of the culture. As was predictable, most of the authorities and all of the public spokesmen explain it by saying there has been a failure of socialization. They say that background conditions have interrupted socialization and must be improved. And, not enough effort has been made to guarantee belonging, there must be better bait or punishment.
>
> But perhaps there has *not* been a failure of communication. Perhaps the social message has been communicated clearly to the young men and is unacceptable.[11]

How about *that*? Could Ginsberg be right in *Howl*? Could Salinger be right in *Catcher in the Rye*? Is the world of adult activity and experience "phoney" through and through? Do many dropouts sense for themselves the meaningless of "the modern experience" as Kerouac portrays it in *On the Road*? Might it just be that, guilty as he is for failing to achieve what others expect of him, believing he should stay in school and seek the excellence that society rewards, ashamed at being unable to bring himself to do what he thinks he should, the dropout still senses, beneath it all, that the whole system is designed to *use* him to someone else's advantage? By contrast, Blake's Chinese student sensed he was working *for* his own group and *against* the system of economic and political control that had dominated Hawaii from the beginning of missionary colonization. Where does tomorrow's dropout find a Blake? Where does he find anyone in the school or the community who will stand with him and for him, and who has a mind open enough to admit that on some points, he the dropout, may be right, and the existing practices in school, employment, politics may be wrong. And who can help him do something about it?

THE PROBLEM

Basically, the move to keep the dropout in school proceeds on the same grounds as the move to encourage the academically talented to achieve scholarly and artistic excellence. The difference is that the academically talented has every reason to believe that if he tailors his talents to the

[11] Paul Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd* (New York: Random House, 1961), pp. 10–11.

opportunities the system provides he will be rewarded with position, respect, power, income, security, and self-satisfaction. The potential dropout, instead, has no reason to expect that these will follow no matter how hard he tries.

Thus we have two substantial minorities—the academically talented and the academically undernourished—both of whom need vastly different diets from the one the school feeds to the majority of its students. The academically talented can remain alive on that starchy diet so congenial to the middle group, but often get fat and develop the minor diseases of an unbalanced intellectual diet. For the undernourished, however, the starch that sustains the majority is a poison, and not being a Socrates, such a student will drop out rather than die. And all the while the school continues to serve up the diet that best suits the middle group.

The problem, then, is how to provide the different kinds of nourishment that each group needs. It is a search for a basis for understanding the individual in relation to his capacities as well as in relation to the role he plays in society. It involves questions of what the individual can be expected to do and what the society can be expected to allow. Genuine give and take cannot merely mean "the student gives and the society takes." There must be offerings forthcoming from society as well. It is a question of social philosophy. Only a well-thought-out social philosophy can fortify the teacher who would remain true to standards of academic excellence yet, like Blake, commit himself to acting on behalf of those about to drop out. *The easy thing for a teacher to do is to hold tightly to excellence and resign himself to the failure of the unfit. The other simple-minded solution is to "feel" for the underdog and abandon all hope for excellence.* Anyone can offer support to the able. Many can work hard out of pity for the underprivileged. But the measure of commitment to teaching is how much one can give to those having trouble without abandoning standards of achievement—a most exacting task. Anything else comes close to merely "keeping school." And keeping school, like keeping house, can be a very dull business. Making better scholars out of those already talented and successful has its rewards, as does making the unsuccessful more comfortable and less anxious about their failure. Neither, however, is the kind of teaching that matters most.

In today's Current Academic Emphasis it is fashionable to be an intellectual snob at the expense of social responsibility; such teachers can always find support and justification among fellow intellectuals. Not long ago it was fashionable for the teacher to have a social conscience even at the cost of intellectual responsibility; such teachers find enough comfort in good deeds to avoid facing the challenge of intellectual competence. But good teaching demands that the teacher rationally integrate the two so his teaching exhibits a balanced responsibility. Hope of attainment begins with a philosophy of society. Only then can the teacher

see, as Blake saw in Hawaii, how to treat the potential dropout as if he had a right to remain in school and the academically talented as if he had a right to exercise that talent in his own behalf.

There comes a time when each man must extract from society what it will not willingly offer of its own accord. To do so he may have to oppose teachers, parents, business leaders, religious authorities, governors, presidents, and even vestiges of his own conscience developed in him without his awareness. *How* he does it is the measure of social responsibility. *That* he does it is the mark of his manhood.

The tragedy of American education in this century is not that students drop out of school or that excellence among the academically talented is blunted. Both are misfortunes; tragedy is heroic. That so few men ask of society more than it willingly gives is a failure of grand proportion, which we try to cover with euphemisms: "adjustment" and "maturity." The tragedy is that twentieth century man has not seen fit to develop ideals *for himself*. What ideals he has come from the nineteenth or earlier centuries. Neither the academically talented nor the dropout receives much help in forming, for himself, ideals that will shape him into a man. Rather, both become what society makes them. And society, left to its own devices, makes very little it cannot immediately use.

Most who deal with the problems of the academically excellent and the dropout perceive clearly that something must be altered severely to reverse the trend toward wasting human talent. But because their goals are excellence for the talented, or income for the dropout, goals implanted deep within the existing social structure, they look at the school and the child as the place for change.

So long as they continue to do so the problem seems one of institutional reorganization and the reconstruction of self. He who accepts the present social arrangements in and beyond the school has nowhere to look for a solution other than in philosophy of human nature. He who does not question either his social philosophy or his concepts of human nature must be content with questioning the institution of public schooling. Instead, he who seeks a new perspective from which to view society must hold his notions of excellence, talent, and incentives for potential dropouts up to inspection. He must look again at his view of human nature and its social environment to find a working harmony. From such uses of social philosophy, a philosophy of education can emerge. The school might become a place where theory breathes life into practice, into students, and into a new and improved society. The search for such a new perspective can be a dangerous business.

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

Frequently those who speak about making the school a "breeding ground for academic excellence," or of "increasing the holding power on the

dropout," set the goals of education in terms of a widely accepted but unexamined notion of opportunity conjoined with a similarly "obvious" conception of talent. The appeals for "equal opportunity" and "letting no talents go to waste" ring true and loud. Mostly, they refer to economic opportunity and academic or commercial talent. Hence, aid to the academically able and the undertalented eventually focuses on providing fuel for the engines of production and protection among both the excellent students insufficiently taxed as well as those so overtaxed they leave the system. Policies developed at such a level of thought lead to ingenious plans to show how opposites are really similar, since both belong to the same society. Programs seek to overcome the differences between opposites by jockeying standards of achievement and modes of presentation.

In some senses the academically excellent and the dropout belong to quite different societies. Most of these senses are sociological, built around an examination of the role they will play as adults. There remains a philosophic sense, however, that views society as a whole. Depending upon how society as a whole is seen to be, so will the academically excellent and the dropout be seen to have different roles to play and even different characteristics as human beings.

In today's world there are at least four competing views of what society is like, each of which operates as a master plan that sets the specifications for the architecture of a particular social system. These can be best grasped as simple analogies which liken the unexaminable whole of an almost unknowable complex called "society" to something so simple and commonplace that everyone can grasp the basic principles that are supposed to be operating. These analogies are not necessarily separate or mutually exclusive. Frequently two or more are combined to account for a different aspect of what seems to occur.

Boldly named, the analogies are of society as a herd, a jungle, a marketplace, and an organism. The "jungle" as the "marketplace" are spatial concepts that concentrate on the environmental conditions that, in good measure, make society function as it does, thus these analogies represent an attempt at objective analysis. "The herd" and "the organism" deal less with the space in which action takes place and more with the biographies of the individuals and groups who make up society. These are *agent*, not space, analogies which explore the subjective makeup of men in the mass. Most social philosophies have both an objective and subjective aspect which give a map of the activities of agents in social space, hence they often incorporate several elements from each of the four analogies to build a view of society that appears both apt and complete.

To find out how different elements of each analogy give different meanings to "opportunity" and "talent," and as a consequence to policies designated to accommodate the academically excellent and the dropout, we must examine them one by one.

The ancient slave, the medieval serf, the Renaissance peasant, the French bourgeois, the Russian proletariat, and the American mass consumer have all been likened by social philosophers to sheep or cattle who naturally or instinctively herd together. Terms like "the general public," "the masses," "the Asian hordes," "the common people," and Shakespeare's simple "the general," as well as "mob rule," "collective mind," "mass opinion," and "the voice of the people," all designate or allude to the herdishness of large groups.

By looking at human beings as one unit, the herd, it is possible to transfer intact a whole set of characteristics from sheep or cattle to people. If people are viewed this way it becomes unnecessary to worry about what happens to individuals within the herd, just as a field commander need not worry about which of his men are killed so long as he knows accurately how many will be left after the hill is taken. Using such a subjective analogy an observer can think he has a personal understanding of what men are like, without the bother of having to become acquainted with any part of "the masses" personally.

Educated men from upper-class homes who begin near the top of a business or profession often exhibit contempt for "the herd," even though it is something they have barely seen and rarely mixed with. A boy from a middle or upper socio-economic suburban neighborhood can go from public school through college and into business, a profession, or science without ever having joined the herd as, for example, a slum kid, an army private, a manual worker, a Coney Island swimmer, or a subway commuter. But, as community leader he will pretend to understand (and believe he does) the delinquent and the dropout. As army officer he will meet the "conspiracy" of enlisted men. As business executive he will negotiate with labor leaders or grievance committees but possibly never understand the dignity of labor. Taking his leisure in a country club that prides itself on exclusiveness, he will see nothing really wrong with the fact that it, like his college fraternity, is open only to well-to-do white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Finally, as a politician he will meet with minority groups and be sincerely hurt when someone writes that he hasn't a clue about how the Negro or the Jew feels. There he stands, full of indignation, dispensing charity through a philanthropic fund with the best of motives —the good shepherd guarding and feeding his needy flocks—and the bloody sheep don't like him. Well, one can't expect gratitude from sheep, that's the way they are.

The analogy of the herd allows for the transfer of characteristics of sheep or cattle, to man en masse, and serves as a catalyst for the assignation of stigma since what may be very fine for sheep usually turns out to be quite dehumanizing for man. It is from the *stigma* ascribed to the masses that

the program of needed social action is deduced. Even such terms as "the culturally deprived" or "members of poverty groups," which are coined by the "haves" to describe the "have-nots" become ways of viewing the masses and from the stigmata of being colored or poor—or worse, both—social sheepherders work out programs to care for the flock.

CONTROL

The important characteristic of sheep and cattle as far as a comparison between the herd and men is concerned is that sheep and cattle in a group are in general easily led, even to slaughter, and lack much mind of their own. Individually—that is, separated from the herd—they are almost defenseless and fall easy prey to wolves, coyotes, pumas, and wildcats but cannot destroy other forms of animal life except by accident. Collectively, when frightened, cattle in a herd can stampede and destroy everything in their path, trampling the slow and clumsy among them with blind and wild abandon. Once a stampede begins it can be turned this way or that, but not stopped until it runs its course. But most of the time a good shepherd can prevent a stampede and guide the herd to new pastures with the help of a few well-trained dogs. Always, the herd represents a truly terrible power that it can neither summon for a specific purpose nor control once unleashed. Thus, it must always be controlled; each member must be trained to obey the commands of the shepherd and his subordinates, the sheep dogs. The very survival, as well as the nourishment and contentment, of each individual seen as a member of a herd depends upon his obeying the orders of the leader who knows how to avoid the predators, find the best pastures, and watch over him as he grazes or sleeps. The worst possible thing is for a sheep to think he can become a shepherd.

The violence of the street gang, of delinquents, or of some children might seem to make it impossible to ascribe to them the docility of herd members. However, their uncritical acceptance of fads, uniforms, and any local leader who takes charge of their small bands is cited as ample evidence of docility. In such small groups the discipline sometimes approaches military regimentation.

To those who see people in general as resembling sheep, neither the dropout nor the academically excellent belongs to the herd—the former because of deficiencies in makeup and performance, the latter because of superiority in both. The academically accomplished are promised positions as shepherds, and the dropouts are threatened with the loss of the comfort, security, and nourishment that comes with denial of herd membership. Knowing they cannot become leaders, unwilling or unable to join the herd, some dropouts, some delinquents, and some street gangsters stay just inside the law but just outside society for a few years of their youth—by becoming ski bums and surfers, by impersonating college students, or by living at home to hang around on street corners. So long as they remain free of the obligations of both work and study, without visibly suffering the

punishments of indolence (and even worse, if they have fun) they pose a double threat. They lead the herd to wonder about the necessity of working, and they prove that the shepherd's control is not complete.

In such a social outlook, work has a morality that extends quite beyond physical survival or material well-being; it remains a major instrument of control, just as it does in prison where the convict benefits little or not at all as consumer of the product he makes, yet has less chance or inclination to cause trouble when he has something to do. In this respect, both the dropout who succeeds in not working and enjoys it, and the academically able who graduates from college and turns "beat" in Sausalito or Greenwich Village, managing to subsist while working little or not at all, throw the same affront in the face of the people and their leaders. Not wanting the rewards of the system, yet not transgressing its enforceable laws, such mavericks are difficult to control.

COMMAND

Whenever a huge population is cast in the image of the herd there is the clear implication that most people do not know what is best for them or how to take care of themselves. They must be told what's best, shown what they should do, cared for while they go about doing it, and all this must be accomplished in a simple and direct way in keeping with their limited capacity to cope with complex questions or to follow complicated instructions. While their leaders loudly proclaim their respect for them as human beings, actually they view the herd as simple and simple-minded, happiest when told what to do and made to do it. As every officer "knows," enlisted men aren't happy unless they have something to gripe about. And even in these days of racial revolt, with overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the old delusions can still be heard: "Really, the southern Negro prefers segregation." "He doesn't want to vote." "He prefers to have his own schools, johns, fountains, beaches, community, and part of the bus." The American Indian is supposed to prefer the reservation because life outside is too complex and demanding. As if life for a southern Negro were not twice as complex as for his white counterpart! As if scratching a living from the Nevada desert at Pyramid Lake were not ten times harder and one tenth as profitable as dealing cards at Reno!

So has it always been: the less a king knew about how his subjects lived the surer he could be that their lives were simple and idylic. Though few today believe in the divine right of kings, which carried with it the obligation of absolute obedience, the same stigma that monarchs once ascribed to the peasantry are still assigned to minority groups, and sometimes to the general public, as part of a move to justify the exercise of executive authority and to overcome resistance to commands issued. Men who see themselves as leaders, who know what is best for the people, have little patience with those who will not follow orders. As leaders they expect to command, and few indeed will be those who are in a position to question.

Certainly a school that has to support such a system will exist principally to provide training in followership, even among those whose academic excellence suggests they might eventually become leaders. To prove their fitness to lead, they will have to demonstrate over a long period that they can follow. The army has the maxim that before a man can give orders, he must be able to take them.

The school system of ancient Rome, as characterized by Cicero and Quintillian, provides the best example of how the political power necessary to administer a social system among vast populations viewed as herds determines the skills, content, and methods that give meaning to academic excellence. The family and the field were the training ground for agricultural skills. Apprenticeships in towns and cities yielded the needed manufacturing, distribution, accounting, and retailing skills. The army and the fleet trained its own military might. Schools trained statesmen in a social system where administrative, judicial, and executive abilities focused on the skills of grammar and rhetoric so necessary for a statesman who had to be able to defend his local decisions and relate them to established policy. In making a speech a Roman politician drew upon all the techniques of hypnotic rhythm, dramatic bombast, deceptive oversimplification, subtly warped argumentation, innuendo, implication, conscious exaggeration, and tear-jerking entreaty, pronouncing all with an air of utter conviction. As a professional mourner wails to shape the grief of the bereaved, so the leader of herds of people uses every emotive technique of persuasion as an instrument to shape the beliefs of men. Cicero, who could sound like an orchestra, it has been offered, could make black seem white to the masses. In the rhetorical schools of ancient Rome, Cicero stood as an outstanding embodiment of academic excellence. He had the ability to hypnotize and sway masses so necessary to the efficient administration of political power. It mattered not at all that he did not push reason to the logical conclusions where new insights might lie. In the Roman schools, an Aristotle would possibly have been a dropout.

To the contrary, in Aristotle's school or Plato's academy a Cicero could not have survived. Neither Adolph Hitler nor Billy Sunday cared much about the logical adequacy or the informational accuracy of what he said. As leaders of masses, they were out to persuade, and not to reason and present fact. A school that used Billy Graham as its model of academic excellence would have to fail Bertrand Russell. Closer to home, in assigning grades, the high school and college programs that measure academic excellence in terms of mastery of information, logical skills, comprehension of scientific theory, and ability to do mathematical exercises set measures of achievement that try to minimize the influence of sheer persuasion. Notice that successful politicians, whether state or national office holders, seldom come from the top of their college graduation class

and almost never come from a program where what one knows matters more than how one presents what one says. As in ancient Rome, our politicians come from that one profession besides theology where rhetoric matters most—law. Next to law, politicians come from the areas of business where rhetorical skills are most valued. They are not engineers who become managers of companies, but sons of the wealthy, or salesmen who have spent their lives perfecting the soft or hard sell. Why, then, do novelists, poets, and dramatists fail to win or try for political office, since, obviously, they are masters of rhetoric? But then no one who feels deeply about the meaning of statements or the artistry of the written and spoken word could force himself to say what a politician has to say. To use language as an instrument of manners is to abandon precision of meaning.

Without knowing or trying, society has split the functions of knowing from the function of leading, because the power to persuade—so necessary for the management of the herd—plays a major role in a society that must be wooed into buying what no one needs by the creation of artificial wants. Advertising, even more than politics, reflects the contempt the verbal power elite has for the masses. Many television writers express open contempt for the stupidity of an audience that watches the programs they write and buys the products they advertise. Fortunately, advertising and politics have not yet formed a direct coalition. When they do, however, this country will face a threat of totalitarianism all the more fearful because of the extensive development of mass media. Orwell showed how such a coalition might work in *1984*.

THE SCHOOL

The public school curriculum has managed to embody the split between the persuasive arts and the informative subjects in both the method and the content of teaching. This split makes it almost impossible to speak clearly about something called academic excellence or to approach the problem of the school dropout in any unified way. Subjects like social studies, problems of American democracy, economics, geography, history and literature lend themselves to a reliance upon the persuasive arts to the near exclusion of reliable information, careful distinctions, and tightly woven argument. Everyone knows of those students who get good grades primarily because they have "the gift of gab." For them, academic excellence can be a matter of glibly obscuring ignorance. Sometimes they can steer a course in high school and college that keeps them from having to cope seriously with chemistry, physics, mathematics, a foreign language, and those courses in English, history, and biology taught in ways that would reveal their ignorance. Teachers who equate mere verbal fluency with academic excellence sometimes unwittingly accept such students as legitimate school leaders and help perpetuate the view that ability to articulate is the best measure of ability to lead the herd. The student who senses he is getting by on bluff is encouraged to look down on those he

fools and to set himself above those who must work hard to master information in other courses where hollow generalities will not pass as mastery. Among adults, notice the contempt a fast talking salesman has for an accountant or an engineer.

In speaking of academic excellence, it becomes quite necessary to specify the kind of excellence, the standard of achievement, and the method for assuring that it can be achieved. One reason for the disparagement of multiple-choice objective tests and simple-response programs for teaching machines may be that some teachers and many students feel lost when they cannot bluff. When the art of sheer persuasion, devoid of any reliance on documentation and demonstrable proof, empirical or logical, becomes the principal teaching technique and the standard of academic excellence in discussion and essay tests, vapid fluency triumphs over the mastery of content in any subject matter discipline. Indeed, quite subtly, the school has taught subjects like social studies or problems of American democracy, from time to time, as exercises in verbal trickery to meet the demands for blind belief made under the McCarthy reign of terror or the Birch idiocy that would link Eisenhower and all to his left with a communist conspiracy. Even more subtle, however, has been the school's passive acceptance of its role in training a nation of gullible consumers and glib salesmen at the cost of the intellectual integrity that could be seen to lead toward the reduction of bias and the growth of a capacity to make increasingly penetrating distinctions between ideas. The use of language more as manners than for meaning makes the natural alliance between Norman Vincent Peale and Dale Carnegie an unbeatable combination.

The view of society as a herd to be told and controlled assumes that members of the herd must be trained to believe what others say, rather than to find out anything for themselves. The minute amount of original source material consulted and interpreted by the student in sixteen years of schooling, propped against the impenetrable wall most books place between the student and the source, makes every pupil a consumer of thoughts he cannot examine. Indeed, he can no more find out where or how what he has been taught comes from or was found out than he can discover the basis of a salesman's claim for his product. He settles for the illusion of proof quite similar to those offered on a television commercial for tooth paste or deodorant. The herd must believe what it is told about political leaders, as it does about tooth paste. And among competing political leaders there is often about as much difference as among competing tooth pastes. The art of persuasion lies in creating the appearance of difference where little or none exists. If the differences were actual and significant, it might be possible to base a choice upon information.

The herd must have faith in, not knowledge of, its leaders, especially if the leaders make a mistake, since the conviction remains that a faulty plan firmly executed is to be preferred over a fine one weakly carried out. Presidents, senators, congressmen, mayors are all known to us, not as in-

dividuals, but as titular heads of political myths, ballyhooed into popularity by press agentry as skillfully dedicated to creating the *illusion* of a man as ever was Clark Gable's or Humphrey Bogart's. The herd view of society depends upon a double stereotyping that sets the leaders apart from and above the common man, as surely as a king was apart from and above his subjects. The difference is that now the millionaire candidate must act folksy. Maintenance of this maximum difference is easiest when each knows as little about the other and his circumstances as possible. In previous ages, the peasant never got to court, and the king never strayed into the fields. With present reportage and transport, press and television get into White House parties, and the President visits Appalachia for an hour or two, so the sharecropper thinks he knows what a multimillionaire's life is like, and the President thinks he has had first-hand contact with poverty. The gap remains as great as before, though it seems less. Since there is only one President at a time, we seem to know all about him. Since the poor are many and well distributed, the easiest thing to do is to think of them in terms of those the President visited. So the notion grows, that leaders have all kinds of interesting differences, while the poor, like sheep, are all much the same—just as during World War II one seldom mistook one American G.I. for another, while Japanese soldiers were all "Japs," and who could tell them apart, except the Japanese?

Beyond the problem that the meaning of academic excellence bounces back and forth between persuasion and information lies the larger problem of attending to the few and disregarding the many. Those who stand out from the herd as candidates for leadership receive attention for their unique qualities. In education, this is called "attending to individual differences." Those already dropped from the ranks of school attendance and the many who may become dropouts can easily be lumped together under such sweeping terms as "low intelligence," "culturally deprived," or "academically unfit." We pay attention to the differences of those who succeed, but not of those who fail.

Had we but one picture of society in mind, the problem of academic excellence and dropouts could be outlined eventually with simple clarity. At the same time that we view people as sheep in a herd, we may also have an incongruous spatial picture of the social environment more accurately characterized as a jungle than as a plain. To fit sheep into a jungle or leopards onto a plain takes a bit of doing.

THE ANALOGY OF THE JUNGLE

A herd is a place where all the animals are much the same and little attention need be paid to the plain on which they live. A jungle, however, is an infinitely treacherous place inhabited by all manner of strange and terrible beasts. In a herd, where power matters above all else, the size and weight of an animal tells you most of what need be considered about his

strength and force. In a jungle, size and weight tell you nothing about the deadliness of a species; size and weight can be more of a handicap than a help. Attention shifts to stealth, slyness, and special features of adaptation. The herd's power and protection is in numbers and it is all *victim*, preying on nothing, only being preyed upon. In the jungle each beast protects itself, preying upon and being preyed upon in turn. Survival of the fittest takes place by natural selection; no one intervenes on the behalf of the slow, the weak, the crippled, the injured, or the dumb.

So, some would argue, should it be in society. According to this belief, what counts is competition for survival, not fattening for the table.

Members of a herd are kept from competing for grazing space by a shepherd who trims the herd to fit the available food supply or takes it to new pastures. In the jungle everyone searches out his own nourishment, and each member is legitimate prey for anyone who thinks he can triumph. For the herd, that government that governs *most* governs best; hence the built-in momentum toward totalitarianism. For those who liken society to a jungle the principle reverses: that government that governs *least* governs best.

Since true government is seen as the operation of what are taken to be natural social forces, which are as unalterable and irresistible as the force of gravity, the purpose of man-made government is purely negative: to restore or preserve conditions that allow the law of survival to operate through open and free competition. Hence there is a built-in impetus toward the abolition of man-made government which borders on anarchy —not as an appeal for mere chaos, but in the belief that only without government will the true order of nature prevail. Those who see society as a jungle prefer democracy, or another form of governmental pluralism, because it lies in the direction they want to move—the loosening of man-made controls. The fewer the artificial social controls the more latitude for the cut-throat competition of the jungle, where all that matters is the aggressive talent of the individual. If a man's life is "nasty, brutish, and short," at least it remains entirely his for as long as he can make it last. Opportunity becomes the chance to exploit whatever talents one has however one can and will.

This is unfettered individualism at its extreme, and few who espouse it would care to see it flourish in this form. Rather, they would like to see it prevail in those special areas where they believe *themselves* most fit to triumph. Blind to their own bias, they opt for a very special kind of opportunity. Ironically, they think they are voting for the elimination of controls, while actually to ensure the kind of situation they favor would require a most careful kind of governing. They appear to endorse free and open competition without restraint, when they really mean that others should be restrained while they should not.

Just as the gambling houses in Nevada can boast they turn an honest wheel which is subject only to the laws of chance only because every game they play has a built-in margin that ensures the house will systematically profit, so do political conservatives appeal for open competition and survival of the fittest so long as they can set the rules of competition to favor their own kind of fitness. Both the gamblers and the political conservatives are prepared for certain losses, and each bettor or voter can hope he will make a killing. This is enough to make some bettors and some voters willing to wager all against the house or the economic system in hopes of being "the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo." Indeed, the long shot has much appeal, whether in the Irish Sweepstakes or the business of growing wheat. And many a man who has never won continues to play the numbers. Yet in practice the notions of competition and survival of the fittest that underlie appeals for rugged individualism are rigged by those who design the rules of the game. To keep this fact hidden from themselves and others they call their rules "laws of social nature," no more to be contested or thwarted than the second law of thermodynamics.

THE SCHOOL

With these "laws" in mind, the individualist views the school as a screening device that separates the fit from the unfit. Academic excellence becomes synonymous with fitness to survive in the social jungle, and the term "dropout" designates the unfit, even though some of the excellent will be devoured and some of the unfit will triumph briefly. One of the worst things the school can do is to keep the youngsters from testing themselves against each other, for it encourages optimism and complacency in the unfit by leading them to expect greater success than they can achieve when thrown on their own resources. Only in open competition for grades and rewards in school can they get a realistic notion of where they stand, and what to expect when they leave the protection of the classroom.

Just as leopards raised in a game preserve fail to develop the instinctive responses to danger that would help keep them alive in the jungle, so will the child raised in a protective school environment fail to develop his own peculiar talents to a sharpness that will facilitate his survival. A child with limited talents must experience failure in school, the better to endure the inevitable failure he must face in society. Social promotion that keeps him with his age group, even if it has surpassed him in achievement, leads him to think he can have what he has not earned and keeps him from finding his own way of earning what he needs.

Here the term "individual differences" receives a peculiar slant not apparent in connection with training for herd membership. Leadership means less and the survival power of each individual means more. In attending to individual differences the teacher must provide a jungle-like setting that forces each individual to survive in his own way. Of course, recognizable cheating is not condoned, but there is admiration for the

shrewdness that gets things done by exploiting the gap between the letter of the law and the flagrant violation of it. Excellence for survival may be much broader than mere academic accomplishment, and indeed the straight A student who always does just as he is told is seen to lack the cunning so necessary for success, even survival.

The jungle analogy suggests a pitting of differences against each other with no assurance of who will triumph in any particular encounter. Most, if not all, of living turns out to be a pitiless contest with few holds barred, and the best way to learn to fight is by fighting. The academically excellent pin their hopes on wit over brawn, and the less able must gain mastery in a particular patch of the social jungle—for example, the grease pit or the assembly line. While the members of the herd will be much the same wherever they go, and might best benefit from a general willingness to follow commands, the different species of jungle fighters must become intensely specialized. Where leaders need expect only minimum trouble from members of the herd or each other so long as the chain of command remains firm at every link, those who succeed in the competitive encounters of the social, economic, and political jungle have no such clear hierarchy of control to protect them from defeat. They must remain in a constant state of readiness, fitness, preparedness, because they never know when a serious challenge may have to be met. Excellence involves keeping in the kind of shape boxers or cougars display, the one by training for a planned bout, the other by killing his dinner every day.

This view of readiness to take up a challenge and win fair or foul, so typical of urban lower-class and slum-gang hostility, runs afoul of the middle-class Queensbury sense of fair play and sportsmanship so much a part of most teachers' expectations for childhood behavior. Thus the lower-class potential dropout may frequently show attitudes and abilities basic to the "killer instinct" that might take him to the top of a highly competitive business structure if he had the minimum set of manners, speaking habits, financial assets, cultural background, and educational attainments to begin at a level where his struggle would pay off in recognition and promotion rather than detention and punishment. On the other hand, the middle- or upper-class child who has the family connections, the college degree, the cultivation in speech and manners, and the initial opportunity may lack the drive and shrewdness to claw his way to the top.

Thus a different kind of split develops in the assessment of academic excellence. The teacher as representative of middle-class social standards of behavior, and as guardian of a scholarly heritage, tends in part to equate accomplishment with a receptive passivity that leads to the mastery of routine assignments. Lower-class students with high spirit but little background and less patience for any study that serves no immediate purpose qualify as dropout candidates on two scores: attitude and performance. Business leaders sometimes find that the students who succeed in school somehow lack the initiative to seize upon an opportunity and

develop it the way they once did, or believe they did. This split was most noticeable during the depression, before the middle ranks of technical and managerial activity were staffed almost entirely by college graduates. *Then* it was the college graduate who had to prove himself qualified to take his place among those who had made it the hard way. *Now* it takes a college degree to qualify for most such positions, and the competition takes place among a more standardized product of extended schooling and no large comparison can be made any longer.

Probably the greatest difficulty facing any plan for schooling organized around the analogy between society and a jungle lies in identifying the different kinds of talents most needed to survive and succeed in the present, and then predicting which among them and which not included will be necessary ten years in the future when the child actually takes his place as a full participant in social affairs. This issue is neatly sidestepped by turning the verb "to compete" into the noun "competition" and placing it on a par with such general faculties as a "sense of duty" or "will power." One then trains something vaguely named a competitive instinct which functions in each individual contest whatever its nature. This thinking fails to take into account that each kind of competition—be it for grades in twelfth grade English composition, for election to the student council, or for the position of head cheerleader—has a different set of rules that controls the particular contest as tightly as ever a joust between two knights was regulated. Competition as it occurs in school is a highly stylized ritual, with explicit and implicit rules that favor the child with middle-class advantages and place those below him at a decided disadvantage. It is no surprise at all that the loudest shouts for open competition for grades on a nationally standardized achievement scale come from those in suburbia. *They* know the odds and the rules. In the name of open and free competition they will fight a duel so long as they have the choice of weapons.

Where the herd analogy leads to an emphasis on overt discipline and control because followership is its goal, the jungle analogy, which posits unavoidable laws of competition, first obscures and then confuses the problem of discipline and control. If the laws of competition are as stated, they will out and cannot be denied—so the individual will have to behave as he must as surely as a rock must fall when dropped. This reasoning obscures the fact that social behavior is learned; a determinism that states that a student will be what he will be leaves little room for doing anything about it. The confusion comes in when the student's makeup differs from that of the teacher sufficiently so that the teacher can not accept it. If the teacher really believes that a competitive environment sharpens the traits and talents that best fit the child for his struggle in society, then the teacher might have to accept excellence in lying, stealing, cheating, and bullying as legitimate outcomes; this neither his community nor his own middle-class makeup can allow. To convince his students of

the value of such moral actions as being honest and following the rules of the game without brutality, the teacher may easily retreat from his jungle analogy of society without completely abandoning it by beginning to speak of society as a competitive marketplace.

Meanwhile, when he speaks of academic excellence, the teacher may continue to re-enforce the dichotomy between the persuasive skills and the informational subjects, thus making it impossible to have anything approaching a single criterion of achievement (in, say, social studies) because he cannot abandon either the rhetoric of hollow salesmanship or the comprehension required of an apprentice scholar. Both remain legitimate spheres of competition. He might persuade himself that academic excellence consists in some balanced mastery of both, and then he runs a risk of having a superficial knowledge of economics, history, geography, political science, sociology, and whatever else goes into social studies, so that he cannot then qualify as a good judge of even apprentice scholarship. *By default he may teach and grade after the manner of bull-session rhetoric without realizing that there is a level of scholarship quite beyond his own acquaintance, hence totally beyond his students' reach so long as he remains their teacher.* That some such gap exists is strongly suggested when the former high school honor student enters college and finds his glib oversimplifications red-penciled or struck down in discussion.

This raises the alarming possibility that some who drop out, and many who do not go on to college, may have been victims of an inability or unwillingness to play a purely rhetorical game. Actually, many who succeed in this rhetorical game in high school must overcome some very bad habits of study and expression to succeed in premedical, engineering, and science programs in college. In a very important sense we do not have continuity among high school performance, college achievement, and professional or business accomplishment, even though grades are the best single indicator of success. This speaks well for the adaptability of students who receive public school approval, but suggests that when the student cannot adapt to the school, and the school remains inflexible, the conditions that result in maximizing dropout rates are already established. In certain respects our society is increasing its demands for inflexibility in children.

In the past decade, which encompasses the rise of McCarthyism and the John Birch Society, there has been an alarming growth in the number of children so severely conditioned by the age of fifteen that they cannot reason on controversial subjects like segregation, school prayer, the Fifth Amendment, socialized medicine, disarmament, the use of nuclear weapons, and Castro's effect on Cuba. Racism, religious fundamentalism, political and economic conservatism, and militarism have become a way of life for whole segments of the population as the popularity of Governor Wallace, Billy Graham, Malcom X, ex-Senator Goldwater, and generals MacArthur and Walker indicate in differing degrees. When children come to school

already blinded by the indoctrination of extremist groups few teachers have the courage to oppose, the security to resist, the opportunity to ignore, the fortune to escape, or the capacity to correct the effects of such a cruel warping.

This increase in childhood and adolescent extremism serves as a disturbing barometer of adult attitudes, further confusing the issues of excellence and dropout. Extremists differ with and sometimes oppose each other, but they frequently employ quite similar tactics and exhibit an equal disregard for thorough documentation or careful logic in their haste to persuade. Once extremists become a bit more sophisticated and realize that they can exploit the purely rhetorical aspect of academic excellence as a training for demagoguery, while leaving the teacher free to deal with whatever information he chooses, then, instead of attacking surface issues such as world federalism or evolution, they will further the destruction of social studies as a school subject by defending its greatest weakness. This will complete the separation of opinion from knowledge, making it possible for antithetical standards of excellence, promotion, continuance, and elimination to operate side by side with as little common ground as now exists between anti-evolution fundamentalists and scholars in biology.

In such ways attitudes and outlooks powerful in society mold the conditions to which the school must adapt, entering directly as factors influencing teachers and teaching. When the school or the teacher bends to each breeze of public opinion in the mistaken belief that consistency with democratic principles requires it to teach or not to teach *whatever* the public dictates, it admits that knowledge and understanding can be dissociated from evidence and proof; but when the school or the teacher stands firm in a hurricane of public opinion the danger of being swept away is real. It may well be such a choice that will face the public school before Orwell's infamous date of 1984.

The view of society as a herd would seek to minimize this kind of problem by having one official dogma handed down to the masses from above in full conviction that revolution can be averted. The view of society as a jungle is willing to let such issues be solved by so-called open competition, confident that whatever and whoever survives must be in accord with the working of natural law. But another view of society seeks to mix persuasion, competition, and information within a carefully designed and governed marketplace.

THE ANALOGY OF THE MARKETPLACE

The dumb brutishness of the herd and the naked competition for survival in the jungle are both tempered by, but still lurk in, the view of society as a marketplace for the exchange of goods, services, and talents.

The Malthusian principle that the masses will multiply much more rapidly than the food supply can be increased accepts the necessity of high infant mortality, disease extending to the scope of a plague, and the mass

slaughter caused by war as preferable to the universal starvation sure to come without them—in part because these processes are believed to eliminate the weak and the less fit. In a period when capital was limited, medicine primitive, war continual, and birth control unknown it seemed sufficient to justify the inevitable by setting it down in a law-like equation. After Malthus, rampant social Darwinism extended the biological notion of natural selection in the struggle for survival to the economic principle of minimally regulated competition in the marketplace to show that care for the aged, aid for the handicapped, protection for the feeble-minded, charity for the poor, support for the slow, untalented, or unfortunate were all against nature's way. Nature incorporates a vulture to clean the bones and a hyena to chew them up after the sick, the slow, or the unfortunate fall victim to the strong, the quick, and the shrewd. Nature does not pity its own or burden itself with their care, nor should society.

Thus when the industrial revolution dawned with its promise of massive production, distribution, and consumption, as well as its thirst to expropriate raw materials, exploit labor reserves, and create ever expanding markets, the belief that uncontrolled and unregulated systems of production, distribution, and consumption were a natural expression of self-regulating principles of supply and demand could be defended in terms of Malthusian or Spencerian doctrines which were not to be questioned. Weren't these doctrines based on laws of social and biological nature as unalterable as Newton's laws of physical nature? And if these laws of social nature led to conclusions opposed to religious principles of moral conduct, hadn't Galileo shown the church to be wrong when it pretended to know there could only be as many bodies in the solar system as there were orifices in the human head? Of course, evolution did not prove the word of God to be false or in error. Rather, it showed that it had to be interpreted in the light of new findings about nature. So the moral commandments about lying, stealing, and killing as well as the principles of brotherhood, loving thy neighbor, being thy brother's keeper, and turning the other cheek remained unimpeachable moral guides—only now they had to be interpreted in ways consistent with the nature of society. Shrewdness in the marketplace was not really lying or cheating; protecting your property at the cost of the life of an aggressor was not really killing; being your brother's keeper need not involve rewarding him for his folly or protecting him from disasters that befall him as a consequence of his errors in judgment or deficiencies in ability.

The concept of society as a marketplace where bargains are struck and kept operates on the policy of "let the buyer beware," for *caveat emptor* is a broad social, rather than merely an economic, mandate.

MANAGERIALISM

Sheep grow fat and woolly by grazing on the pastures the shepherd leads them to. Theirs are the peaceful rewards of obedience to a competent

master. Leopards grow sleek and powerful by chasing down frightened gazelles. Theirs are the rewards of the stalk, the chase, the kill, and the feast—all suffused with nervous excitement. Acknowledging no master, they can take pride in themselves. The herd is under maximum political control, while jungle animals enjoy a minimum of political restraint. Each analogy likens society to a different state of biological or physical nature. One sees the herd in need of *regimentation;* the other sees the jungle beast as needing to be *released.*

In contrast, the marketplace—where bargainers buy to make, make to sell, sell to buy, and buy to consume—must be carefully designed, as these activities need to be *well regulated* so all proceeds smoothly. There will be a place for competition, and a place for telling people what to do, but both must fit within a well engineered plan that keeps crime from supplanting bargaining and obedience from inhibiting invention. The buyer must bargain according to rules shared with the seller. The manufacturer must produce according to standards that ensure the consumer will get fair use from the product he buys. The whole marketplace must operate by mutual agreement at every stage of the bargaining process, or the all-important transactions could not take place.

Ideally, each individual might be so self-regulating and the rules of transaction so well understood and accepted that the marketplace could function at least as smoothly as a farmer's market, where the noise of haggling in no way suggests a malfunction in the bargaining process. But in a complex society where haggling is inefficient, where the buyer of an auto cannot discover how well it is made until he has bought it, and where the nation must eat foods that housewives cannot test for the poisonous effect of insecticides, the management must be detailed, explicit, and comprehensive without being petty, arbitrary, or cumbersome. The whole organization of society focuses on business practices. Such *economic utilitarianism* holds out the rewards of a high material standard of living made possible by productive efficiency. It takes pride in the status and power of managerial positions that design and implement policy for each corner of the marketplace. It relies upon the technical or persuasive skills that make an engineer or a salesman indispensable. At each level of management, manufacture, distribution, retailing, invention, and even consumption the bargaining process operates. A poor judge of horse flesh must be content to ride a nag. Those who refuse to haggle cannot expect a fair day's pay for an honest day's work.

Though the school may play down the assessment and haggling process, perhaps because teachers have chosen to become public servants rather than to sell their talents on the open market, this luxury of seeming to be above the marketplace is an illusion only the already rich or the meek who are easily satisfied can afford. Teachers get low salaries and have little status compared to medical doctors because doctors have made health good business, while teachers have become involved in something close to

not being a business at all. Schools do serve the marketplace directly by training talent, but they have a much more important function which serves indirectly to make bargaining possible, for school is where the young absorb the rules of the game even before they set foot in the marketplace as bargainers. Hence academic excellence remains intimately connected with those particular manners that are the rules for bargaining, and the school dropout represents only partial adjustment to the ways of the market. Above all adjustment becomes a central concern often referred to as "maturity." Adjustment to the conditions of bargaining outweighs information mastery, and even the development of skills, since a failure in adjustment threatens economic if not social disruption.

Only a crude and simple barter economy—where, for example, potatoes are exchanged directly for carrots—need focus on a narrowly utilitarian outlook which could find no value in setting time aside to master skills and information having long-range promise but no immediate application. This attitude persists in the rural notion that "Too much l'arnin' spoils a good farm hand."

Yet the view of society as a marketplace has greatly influenced whole nations in determining how standards of excellence would be used to control the flow of students through the schools. France and Turkey provide the best examples of nations with limited and declining economic and political opportunity throughout most of this century where the highest standards of academic excellence in subjects like mathematics, literature, history, languages, and the sciences have been used as a barrier to keep all but the top 2 per cent in ability proven by performance from going beyond a basic school education. Such a barrier assures that only the most able and best educated will compete for the few opportunities available, and guarantees that those who do succeed in the school system will find places available when they graduate. Here academic excellence is associated with skill and information mastery to such an intense degree that those who succeed in school will have proven their capacity and willingness to do as they are told over a sixteen-year period. Further, since almost everyone is dropped out along the way, the disgrace is less (though the suicide rate among students is exceedingly high). Even the dropouts will have received an intense discipline in following the rules by which the academic game is played. The teacher becomes a prestigious foreman, and the jump from school to work is not as great as it might seem. Most important, such a society avoids educating for rebellion by withholding all levels of preparation to all but those who can be guaranteed appropriate rewards and challenging employment. Those who succeed in the school system find their aspirations fulfilled within the existing economic system, hence there are fewer discontented intellectuals to provide leadership for

those whose grievances might dispose them toward rebellion. To some degree, such a system operated in prewar England and Germany, and it operates in Latin America today. The educational systems of the United States, Russia, and Communist China are based on just the opposite approach. Viewing their societies as ever expanding marketplaces, these nations have seen that they would continually suffer from a shortage of well trained and highly educated talent.

Instead of using standards of academic excellence to tailor the supply of graduates to the limited opportunities expected, the United States cut back the standards of academic excellence to ensure increasing the supply of graduates, with full confidence that the economy could absorb them all in rewarding and challenging positions, and indeed, that graduates would open up greater opportunities for the generations to follow. Add to this the increased specialization and the emphasis on technical competence and persuasive abilities so essential to the modern marketplace, and the term "academic excellence" undergoes a twofold change. Things formerly considered nonacademic are called academic, from courses in the strength of metals in departments of engineering to courses in advertising in schools of business. The level of excellence drops to account for the increased numbers of graduates the schools are expected to produce.

At the public school level academic excellence extends quite beyond the earlier curriculum that included mathematics, languages, literature, history, and science, so that it becomes much more difficult to find a standard of excellence applicable to both the college-bound and the terminal student. Are ability in typing and bookkeeping standards of academic excellence for girls who are to be secretaries? In our educational system academic excellence sometimes refers to the college bound or those who take college preparatory courses, and sometimes to the terminal student whose program is tailored for more immediate utility in the marketplace. But the standards for the college bound are applied *as if they pertained to all students*; even the candidate for dropping out is sometimes expected to perform in the same arena. Indeed, by definition, the dropout's problems would be largely solved if he would learn to perform as the college bound do. In the same way, a criminal's problems with the police would be minimal if he would only obey the law. The problem is he can't and doesn't.

The beatniks who—by dress, morality, and detachment from work and the usual standards of success—stepped sufficiently beyond the rules of the bargaining game as carried on in the marketplace of daily commerce became outlaws of custom. In much the same sense, our schools treat the potential or actual dropout not merely as a failure, which would be bad enough, but as an outlaw of marketplace custom. In part, this reaction resembles the frustrated annoyance of someone who has exhausted himself trying to help and feels bitter disappointment at having failed. Some of this is transferred to the student. But deeper, as happened with the beat-

niks, there lurks the inability of a marketplace society to live with someone who cannot or will not bargain on its terms.

For such acceptance, society must be conceived as something more than a marketplace where the rules of bargaining ensure an exchange of the greatest amount of material goods among the greatest number of people.

THE ANALOGY OF THE ORGANISM

If the herd enjoys the tranquil rewards of minimum strife, and the jungle provides the beast with the satisfaction of the chase, then the marketplace offers the pleasures of acquisition, consumption, and ownership of exchangeable commodities. Security, competition, and bargaining all have a place in modern society and hence will influence the way any school approaches the question of how to achieve academic excellence and accommodate the potential dropout. Yet, depending upon how society is conceived, the terms "security," "competiton," and "bargaining" will have different meanings that will directly alter what the individual can expect from society. The security of every sheep in the herd depends upon an obedience to the dictates of leadership. Security in the jungle lies in the strength and cunning of each hunted hunter. In the marketplace security may take the form of insurance and guarantees implicit in the rules of responsibility or explicitly provided for in contracts.

Now it cannot be denied that the herd, jungle, and marketplace analogies each touch on an important aspect of social organization. For the private drafted into the army, life can easily resemble that of a sheep. Those who stalk each other's accounts on the Bigelow carpets of Madison Avenue live in a jungle of their own making. And each of us trades in a number of marketplaces, from supermarkets to used car lots. Correspondingly, the school provides some of the training in regimentation that makes the drafting of youth more endurable. The classroom and the playing field introduce elements of competition unavoidable in the struggle for survival. The moral atmosphere of the classroom, with its injunctions against cheating, teaches the subtle art of evading an open breach between stated principle and necessary practice. The student learns the rules and morality of bargaining so well it never occurs to him that an untruth, falsehood, or monstrous exaggeration made in an advertisement might actually be a deliberate lie.[12] This becomes part of a game in which the concepts of truth and falsity play no part, or little part.

[12] The child learns many languages, not one. He learns the gutter language so evident in the military service where a few choice bits of profanity become adverbs and adjectives that link the body functions with everything and anything. He learns the language of advertising, in which the most outrageous superlatives replace "good," "better," and "best." For example, the smallest package of one brand of soap on the market can be a "giant" size, the other two being "mammoth" and "colossal." In this context "Alexander the Great" seems pretty small.

Interestingly, under the herd, jungle, and marketplace conceptions of society the school serves an important negative function. In disposing the child to accept society as a necessary "given," it conditions him to ask the very minimum of it. The inculcation of this attitude is turned around to give the appearance of positive accomplishment in the now-famous phrase, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." Academic excellence becomes the password for admission. It becomes the index of "adjustment" and an aspect of "maturity." Those who drop out of the school fail themselves, the school, the society, hence the school must "flunk" them. There is little room for the possibility that society and the school are at fault and hence have failed the student who drops out.

These questions become matters of deep concern to those who view society as an organism that achieves optimum health when all the diverse parts function together as a whole. A herd, jungle, or marketplace view of society does succeed in focusing attention on important aspects of group living: communal, competitive, and commercial. But as models they miss the essential human character of what social life can be because they strive to portray it as it seems to be under certain conditions. Basic to the analogy of society as an organism are the breath of life, the pulse of blood running through the whole system, and the response of each part to the needs and expectations of each other part—qualities so absent in the analogies of society as a marketplace, a jungle, or a herd.

Where the herd must subordinate individual purpose to the will and wisdom of the shepherd, insistence upon obedience and discipline finds its justification in collective security. In a jungle the opportunity to compete sets each member against all the others in an unending struggle where wit, stealth, and strength matter more than sensitivity, skill, and comprehension. The marketplace makes much available for consumption by those in a strong bargaining position, but offers little incentive for men to produce anything beyond what is already in demand or can be sold by clever advertising. Societies based on concepts of the herd, the jungle, and the marketplace all have their reasons for supporting a kind of science that leads to improving the stock, hunting more effectively, or expanding the quantity of goods to be sold. All get a bit weak when inquiry becomes so theoretical it does not convincingly promise eventual utility, and basic research goes undone. Each must strain desperately to find some reason for supporting philosophic speculation or the fine arts.

Some would argue, however, that a conception of society that fails to fully recognize such achievements misses the whole point of *human* activity. The herd, the jungle, and the marketplace all stress *alienation.* Each is a pessimistic view of society. Even the most humane leader must be obeyed, or he fails the flock. The meekest animal in the jungle must find someone to eat and run from a host of natural enemies. Bargaining for profit means exploitation somewhere. These are all taken as necessary

and even desirable aspects of the human condition. When translated into a school program for the academically able or the dropout a double alienation occurs: the able compete against each other to struggle toward a fixed end that turns out to be always receding, and the able compete against the disadvantaged for the lion's share of attention.

In an organism alienation means illness with all its crippling effects. Men and societies will be ill from time to time, but most can be restored to something approaching full health for much of their natural lives. This is the optimism of an organismic view of society. Society's institutions exist as agencies for the restoration of social health through *the elimination of alienation* wherever possible.

Paramount among those institutions is the public school. It should help to overcome alienation in the same way the family does, by encouraging *cooperation.* The family that makes each child compete for parental love is a bad, nay, an evil family. Ultimately, it thwarts love and threatens to destroy the child. The school that makes the child compete for grades runs a serious risk of having him miss, or even misunderstand, the whole point of learning.

Our whole history as a nation suggests that those who thrive on competition seldom have the patience and the sense of allegiance to engage in profound quests. Those who view science, scholarship, or art as a competition among giants misunderstand the true nature of those activities, for they are in a most startling way cooperative endeavors. Genius is often the result of cooperation among men who couldn't stand the sight of each other if they had to live together day by day. *Until the cooperative element of academic excellence is recognized as paramount, the schools will continue to mistake their role in the cultivation of genius. Schools should exist to facilitate a dialogue with genius, dead, living, and unborn.*

COORDINATION

For the herd cooperation means the obedience that leads to extensive conformity. In the jungle cooperation borders on conspiracy among predators to simplify the chase and kill, leaving the ever present possibility of a falling out over the division of spoils. Cooperation in the marketplace can mean fixed prices among retailers to reduce bargaining to a take-it-or-leave-it level, yet beneath that lies the network of rules that keeps the market from becoming as overtly cut-throat as the jungle.

In an organism, however, cooperation means something altogether different. In the human organism it means dialogue; not argument, but discussion. Older philosophies have reduced cooperation between body and mind to the kind of subordination that gives the mind the authority to dictate how the body should behave by bringing action under the direction of will. But this dualism has been severely criticized. Newer concepts of the relationship between thought and activity avoid the mind-body dualisms of Plato, Aquinas, Descartes, or Leibniz and deal with

reason as one kind of activity that involves the whole organism in a special way of functioning. Dewey, for example, insists that the projectile power that explodes forth in behavior comes not from something isolatable as "ideas," "thought," "reason," or "will," but from organic *habit:*

> . . . all habits are affections . . . all have projectile power . . . a predisposition formed by a number of specific acts is an immensely more intimate and fundamental part of ourselves than are vague, general, conscious choices. All habits are demands for certain kinds of activity; and they constitute the self. In any intelligible sense of the word will, they *are* will.[13]

For Dewey there can be no "mind over matter,"—in other words, will governing desire, or reason controlling emotion. These are all false dichotomies. What have been separated as mind and matter fuse together in activity. Will and desire join together as a part of effort. Reason and emotions are bound insolubly in interest. Effort stands as the overt measure of interest, which must issue forth as action. And how a man acts depends upon the habits society has equipped him with. For the individual, the key to growth lies in the management of social conditions that make habits possible. For society, the key to growth is in the reorganization of conditions so new habits become possible and so the individuals now having the new habits can further rearrange social conditions to ensure that more people will be able to acquire them. Society as an organism improves its own health by exercising to strengthen weak muscles, accepting the fact that it will perspire in the process. No given set of social conditions can be accepted merely because it has existed a long time. All social conditions must be examined in view of the habits they encourage or impede. If men tend to anger quickly in moments of stress there must be social conditions that encourage this habit. If the habit of being quick to anger leads, for example, to the violence that accompanies racial disputes, the conditions that yield this predisposition must be viewed accordingly. If we want to reduce the amount of violence connected with racial tension, or the tragedies that result from rashness, it is not enough to caution people to count to ten. The social conditions that make quickness to anger a habit must be altered so that patience under stress can become a habit. Only in this way can the social organism improve its health.

The society that produces conflicting habits is as badly coordinated as the muscle-bound athlete who can neither run nor jump because his tensors and extendors work against each other. The well-coordinated society develops conditions that reinforce such habits as patience and generosity. You must choose which habits you want, but you need not accept the ones that you have as unalterable. Society, like the athlete, must continually experiment with new exercises in order to find out what is pos-

[13] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1922), p. 25.

sible with different kinds of habits; there may be such a thing as being too patient, too slow to anger. Like an organism, society seeks an optimum coordination among parts which may, like perfect health, be forever beyond reach. But it need not be beyond imagining, and the school is an excellent place to explore its meaning.

When they treat the dropout as someone who has failed to adjust to society's expectations, teachers resemble a doctor who blames a patient for coming to him with a rare illness because all he really feels competent to do is to treat measles or set a fracture. But a good doctor should treat the patient for the illness he has, not wish he had something else. Teachers spend much time looking carefully for educational deficiencies they know how to correct, but overlook those that may be harder to cope with. By treating the dropout as someone who has disappointed them and society, teachers often ignore the fact that both they and society had a huge hand in making him what he is. Under the mistaken belief that two wrongs can make things right the school compounds the discoordination so as to prove that its judgment of the dropout as a misfit is correct. When social conditions give youngsters habits that work against the child's performing well in school, he is told he must exchange the habits he has for ones that will serve him better; but no one sets up conditions that will

permit the new habits to grow, nor is there much interest in changing the school to make it a place where the habits he has can be turned to advantage. Because the school accepts existing social conditions as unalterable, in effect all it does is to shake its collective head as the student falls further behind. Since the school plays very few tunes, all to about the same beat, the more out of step the child gets the more raggedly he seems to march, until finally all he can do is stand still and let the parade go on. It's all fine and dandy—if the marchers don't look back.

If society is analogous to an organism, from which appendages are to be amputated only as a last resort and at severe cost to the whole body, much attention must be given to the health of each cell in each tissue before anything like general health can be taken for granted. Clearly, no such concern has ever been shown for all individuals within any society. A wise organism does not look with disfavor on its feet because they cannot do what only hands can do, nor would most of us choose to be all hands. We, instead, have showered the body with contempt as the source of sinful appetites and seen fit to punish it for not being mind or soul. So have men shown themselves to be unwise. Similarly we criticize the dropout because he lacks what we recognize as a certain kind of academic excellence. If the truth be known, we might wish to be rid of him altogether.

The grand plan for a school system that does its share to help each child explore the tendencies of habits, possessed or available, lies quite

beyond our present grasp. Until all social institutions—and especially the schools—are seen as organs that exist to help the individual in exploring the widest possible scope of activities, so as to expose possibilities previously unappreciated, the very sense of what social health can be will remain beyond imagination. At present it is as if nature, having developed man, limited his activity exclusively to digging in the ground. Man's whole evolution has been an exploration of what must have seemed at the outset to be quite unpromising possibilities. Without experimentation on a similar scale, society has less hope of evolving.

Forces that increase alienation by emphasizing competition for grades should be replaced by a concept of school achievement that cultivates the coordination of effort in activities that extend quite beyond the limited scope of what is now called academic excellence. Few expect the present candidate for dropping out to engage on a competitive basis with those who will apply for science foundation awards, merit scholarships, or college admission. Frequently, however, both the proven student and the consistent academic failure share a common misunderstanding about why they are in school and what to do once they get out. It is no accident that the college-educated beatnik and the high school dropout exhibit similar symptoms of social discontent. That they articulate them differently is partially a result of their schooling. That they have them stems from society's unwillingness to inconvenience itself by looking carefully at what has grown up in its midst.

Unfortunately, neither those responsible for society's institutions, nor the great majority of people, have ever understood much about involving the young in learning that extends beyond drill or in making use of knowledge that does not fit easily with existing practices. Hence, schools have seldom been able to acquaint more than a few students with the cooperative side of scholarship by which generations of inquirers build an ever growing legacy of knowledge, which still others eventually coordinate into a broad network of understanding that yields a new awareness for many, previously dreamt of by only a few. It involves a continuing dialogue with genius. Achieving this end has been referred to as "transmitting culture," "passing on the established tradition," or "understanding the heritage of the past." Unfortunately, most efforts in this direction have been hampered by a static view of knowledge that fixed attention on individual works and isolated facts, with only the thinnest threads of connection suggesting bare continuity. This is not dialogue. It is in the continuity of learning that the meaning of cooperation and coordination lie, and this is not easily grasped or taught. It is in the communities of poets, painters, historians, novelists, scientists, and scholars, generations apart—not in the daily business of earning a living—that cooperation without compromise is possible. In the building of a theory of evolution or in the writing of a great novel like Joyce's *Ulysses* there is coordination without conformity, not possible in politics or armies.

Today the student must find this out for himself because the school evidently believes that cooperation requires compromise and coordination cannot occur without conformity. *Thus it mistakes the whole meaning of academic excellence by making it a competition in conformity to a single standard of achievement and abandons its responsibility to the potential dropout in its search for a lowest common denominator of content that is already a compromise with what is known.* Conformity and compromise, so much prized by society and so antithetical to scholarship, emerge from most of the school's efforts. Coordination and cooperation, so indispensable to inquiry, make a man difficult to live with when he will not bend to immediate and local opinion nor temper his judgment to make it more acceptable to those who have not investigated as deeply as he.

No wonder a few students who caught the full meaning of cooperation in scholarship with men long dead, and the full feeling of coordination in art among poetry, painting, drama, and the novel, turned "beat" in their search to find a way of escaping the relentless pressures of a society that would press them into a mold they wanted to avoid. Having tasted cooperation with no taint of compromise, having seen coordination made possible only by a shattering of conformity, they became infected with the desire to walk the high wire of genius. How could they swallow the bitter root of the salesman's compromise with the truth, when they knew what Melville had done in *Moby Dick*, or how could they prostitute language to write advertisements and jingles, when they had savored Whitman in *Leaves of Grass*? This was compromise that made cooperation a vice, a conspiracy to divest language of meaning, the easier to perpetrate fraud. For these few the school, the depression, and the war had done their jobs, for some had learned to ask of society more than it was willing to give. Of course they suffered. Of course they failed, with but few exceptions, to produce the kind of works they aspired to. Of course society ridiculed them severely. Most of them eventually broke and accepted their fate as insurance salesmen, English teachers, or field representatives for textbook publishers.

Unlike the expatriate painters and writers of Paris in the 1930's, however, these men formed the first shock wave to disembark from public schools and public colleges. In any assault on a well fortified position the first wave is usually wiped out. Between battles the enemy digs in, repairs its fortifications, and attacks the troopships still in the harbor. The current academic emphasis—with its concern for engineering, agriculture, and applied science in general, and its corresponding neglect of art and humanities—represents to some degree just such reprisals on a public school system that helped launch a complete surprise attack. Yet the question has been asked. *Dare the schools prepare an individual to ask more of society than it willingly offers?* It's a risky business. Yet the alternatives are becoming clear. One cannot have the usual variety of committee compromise and still stay in the mainstream of cooperation in science,

art, or letters. One cannot have the daily brand of junior executive conformity and still coordinate thought into theories, philosophies, or a novel of the scope of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. If these activities matter, and if they matter more than how much money a man can make, then society will not be a healthy organism until it accepts them as necessary nourishment. Then, instead of having to ask more than society willingly offers, the student who grasps the meaning of cooperation and coordination might be invited to explore his particular genius, with fewer people worrying about how often he shaves, whether he bathes, or how he conducts his sex life.

If the mass media have proven anything it is that people of average and below-average abilities can be hooked by a poorly told tale in magazines, on television, or in the movies. A lesson not as yet widely appreciated is that the media create an audience for the quality of programs they present. They say they give the people what they want. It would be more accurate to say that the people learn to expect what is consistently presented. Foreign movies have done much to create an audience for better films that did not exist so long as Hollywood held a monopoly in the United States. Correspondingly, Hollywood films have done much to debase the taste of people around the world. Raising taste is a long and hard task, while lowering taste is quick and easy, so the profit motive quickly found the path of least resistance.

Unfortunately, much of the popularization of content directed toward holding the dropout has taken the same path of least resistance. This has resulted in a counterfeiting of knowledge for the student of average and below-average ability, so that the dropout is handicapped doubly, not only by what he misses, but by what he *learns*. As difficult as the task is, there is no inherent reason why the student of low ability and the student of proven accomplishment cannot both be acquainted with the same stream of intellectual cooperation and coordination, minimally contaminated by the immediate demands society makes for compromise and conformity. A dialogue with genius is no less genuine merely because things are stated so a child can grasp them and respond.

This cannot be done by having everyone read the great books, nor can it be done by insisting that all meet a single standard of achievement. That both the student going on to college and the one about to drop out of the twelfth grade cannot learn something about man's understanding of love from the movie *The Rainmaker* is too pessimistic an outlook for any teacher or any society to be able to afford. Yes, it's a Hollywood movie—in technicolor. Yes, it *is* marvelous entertainment. It happens also to be a movie that says something important in a sensitive way. It doesn't have the academic stature of a novel by Faulkner. It is not *as* good or *as* profound as *Light in August*. Is that so important if the student cannot or will not read Faulkner? The school must create an audience for what it wants to teach, not pander to preferences already present. It cannot

begin where it hopes to finish and expect not to lose the majority along the way. Where the school begins depends entirely upon what the student brings to school. Where it must leave off with each student depends upon the skill of each teacher, the techniques, and the materials available. *But where it will want to go has much to do with the way teachers view society.*

Viewed as a herd, a jungle, or a marketplace, there can be little hope that society can evolve beyond being a place where the individual acquiesces to authority, exploits his skills to their limits, or bargains in safety to consume in comfort. As an organism committed to exploring all avenues to social health, society must tolerate, expect, and eventually enjoy being asked to allow, provide for, and even encourage new demands. In such a society academic excellence, indeed all school achievement, can be cooperation with, and the coordination of, man's deepest insights into his own condition. Such concerns are beyond a herd, a burden to a jungle killer, and merely of commercial value to the bargainer who would use them to make a sale. To an organism searching for social health cooperation with genius that transcends compromise, and coordination of understanding unrestricted by conformity, are miracle drugs that attack what were long regarded as incurable diseases. The school that acquaints the gifted and the deprived with Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick* or Wolf Larson in *The Sea Wolf* or even Captain Bligh in the movie version of *Mutiny on the Bounty* deals in genuine coin, not counterfeit. Coins of different value perhaps—a quarter, a dime, a nickel—but coins nevertheless. Each and all have something to tell the student about himself, his father, his teacher, or his boss-to-be. Each can begin him on the road to seeing people anew, listening to his language, and questioning what he finds around him.

Some students will still drop out of such a school and others will still go on to college. There will be less reason to whip up a frenzy of competition in the name of something called academic excellence, and more reason to show patience toward students who cannot manage to stay in school. Such a school will be working toward creating the kinds of students it wants, not merely processing what society sends it or turning out only what society is prepared to accept. Such a school must have courage, because no institution and no individual in our present society can long stand for something without having to defend itself. Only by knowing what it stands for, and then refusing to give way, can the school show the child that society can be forced to live with what it will not willingly make room for. When children begin to suspect they can be mature without compromising and responsible without conforming, a new and more powerful wave of troops will storm management training programs in an effort to fly their own flag from the executive suite. Others will join labor unions and refuse to be molded into a herd. And perhaps many will find the dialogue with genius so satisfying that they will pursue it beyond the age of sixteen, in or out of school.

Each individual must settle for himself how he will view society. Some will see it basically, in the simple light of a single analogy. The police captain faced with a continual series of riots may take to imposing a herd notion of group behavior on the whole spectrum of social activity. The detective who searches for forty years to track down a host of murderers may see society as one vast jungle filled with predators and victims. Both may have difficulty understanding the position of a lawyer who defends these prisoners from an outlook conditioned by a marketplace notion of justice to be bargained for in the courts. All three may have trouble grasping the outlook of a judge, a warden, or a parole board that views society as an organism and the prisoner as an ill appendage to be restored to full social health. The police captain may want the power to seize and search, the better to herd citizens along the straight and narrow. The detective may want more severe punishment for the guilty so as to deter those who might contemplate violence. The lawyer may want the suspension of police station interrogation so as not to have his case prejudiced by a confession extracted from the prisoner before he has had legal counsel. The judge, the warden, and the parole board may want to get rid of capital punishment so as to have a chance to rehabilitate even a murderer.

Until the police captain, the detective, the lawyer, the judge, the warden, and the parole board members begin to look into their own and each other's conceptions of the nature of society, they will all have great difficulty understanding where and why they differ in outlook. An exploration of differences in social philosophies is no assurance that they will all come to agreement. It is, however, a first step in examining policy disagreements at a more profound level, where principle can be seen.

So it is with teachers. There is no reason to believe we will ever have consensus about how to handle the academically talented child or the dropout. But an examination of social philosophies will provide an opportunity to plumb the questions involved at a level where principles can be discussed more clearly.

Now what we call "bourgeois," when regarded as an element always to be found in human life, is nothing else than the search for a balance. It is the striving after a mean between the countless extremes and opposites that arise in human conduct. If we take any one of these coupled opposites, such as piety and profligacy, the analogy is immediately comprehensible. . . . The one path leads to the saint, to the martyrdom of the spirit, and surrender to God. The other path leads to the profligate, to the martyrdom of the flesh, the surrender to corruption. Now it is between the two, in the middle of the road, that the bourgeois seeks to walk. He will never surrender himself either to lust or to asceticism. He will never be a martyr nor agree to his own destruction. On the contrary, his ideal is not to give up but to maintain his own identity. He strives neither for the saintly nor its opposite. The absolute is his abhorrence. . . . In short, his aim is to make a home for himself between two extremes in a temperate zone without violent storms and tempests; and in this he succeeds though it be at the cost of that intensity of life and feeling which an extreme life affords. A man cannot live intensely except at the cost of the self. Now the bourgeois treasures nothing more highly than the self (rudimentary as his may be). And so at the cost of intensity he achieves his own preservation and security. His harvest is a quiet mind which he prefers to being possessed by God, as he prefers comfort to pleasure, convenience to liberty, and a pleasant temperature to that deathly inner consuming fire.

5

> The bourgeois is consequently by nature a creature of weak impulses, anxious, fearful of giving himself away and easy to rule. Therefore, he has substituted majority for power, law for force, and the polling booth for responsibility.[1]

"Bourgeois," "proletariat" and "middle class" have replaced "serf," "peasant," and "rustic" as trade names for the masses rounded up and herded away from the soil by the industrial revolution to become units of production, accounting, and distribution. Collected in labor pools to staff factories, offices, and shops, workers must have mass housing, mass transportation, an interlacing network of communication, and even mass entertainment.

"Mass" means standardization; everything must be standardized if only to control pyramiding complexity. Uncontrolled, great numbers of people living close together and working to produce, keep track of, distribute, sell, buy back, resell, modify, and adapt great quantities of goods to ever changing conditions can create a diversity that ends in complete paralysis. In its daily habits American society has fully accepted the fact that a highly interdependent urbanized and suburbanized culture functions through well established routine that requires the minimum in performance from the individual. This allows us to step into a bus or a plane and submit our fate to a driver or a pilot who knows his business.

Belonging to a culture fully committed to depending on the machine to perform or help us perform all kinds of tasks, the American accepts a standardization approaching uniformity in both performance and appearance—whether in automobiles, dishwashers, toasters, television sets, tractors, or refrigerators. Standardization in behavior is the routine that gets the worker to his job on time, and a minimum level of competence enables him to operate a lathe without destroying it, himself, or the materials he works on. Standardization in production begins with the interchangeable parts essential to mass manufacture, assembly, stockpiling, parts inventory, and repair. It extends to units of movement by which steps of production and worker performance are analyzed to make each stage of manufacture, distribution, accounting, and retailing as efficient as possible.

So the circle begins and ends in routine. To produce the goods mass production offers there must be machines. The mass use of machines means standardization at all levels of production, distribution, and consumption. Mass production means mass labor, at least until automation is complete, as well as mass markets and mass consumption; and all these depend on routine. Acceptance of what is usually called our high material standard of living means acceptance of what makes it possible: and that is standardization of materials as well as standardization of much behavior. Max Lerner thus describes what this means for Americans:

[1] From *Steppenwolf* by Hermann Hesse, tr. Basil Creighton. Copyright 1929 © 1957 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

In childhood they are fed standardized breakfast foods out of standardized boxes with pictures of standardized heroes on them. They are sent to monotonously similar school houses, where almost uniformly standardized teachers ladle out to them standardized information out of standardized textbooks. They pick up the routine wisdom of the streets in standard slang and learn the routine terms which constrict the range of their language within dishearteningly narrow limits. . . . They devour in millions of uniform pulp comic books the prowess of standardized supermen. . . . They date with standardized girls in standardized cars. . . . They spend the days of their years with monotonous regularity in factory, office, and shop, performing routinized operations at regular intervals. . . . They are drafted into standardized armies, and if they escape the death of mechanized warfare, they die of highly uniform diseases, and to the accompaniment of routine platitudes they are buried in standardized graves and celebrated by standardized obituary notices.

Caricature? Yes, perhaps a crude one, but with a core of frightening validity in it. Every society has its routines and rituals . . . where the primitive is bound by the rituals of tradition and group life, the American is bound by the rituals of the machine, its products, and their distribution and consumption.

What the machine and the mass-produced commodities have done has been to make conformism easier. . . . Yet for the person who has a personality pattern and style of his own, standardization need not mean anything more than a set of conveniences which leave a large margin of leisure and greater scope for creative living. . . . The real dangers of the American mode of life are not in the machine or even in standardization as much as they are in conformism. The dangers do not flow from the contrivances that men have fashioned to lighten their burdens, or from the material abundance which, if anything, should make a richer cultural life possible. They flow rather from the nemesis of the dominant and successful by the weak and mediocre, from the intolerance of diversity, and from the fear of being thought different from one's fellows. *This is the essence of conformity.*[2]

Standardization, then, must be distinguished from conformity, but not disassociated from it. Lerner is right, of course, in saying that the roots of conformity are more psychological than material. The fact that *things* are much the same and certain routines are necessary does not force men to live nearly uniform lives. Why then does the available room for difference remain so unexplored and unexploited? It is too simple to say that people lack the *will* to be different. Somehow they fail to learn how to be different or even to want to be so. And this is Hesse's point in *Steppenwolf,* when he calls the bourgeois a creature of weak impulse content with a temperate balance that keeps his simple-minded "self" in a state of quiet incubation. Avoiding extremes, he seeks a path of least resistance, settling for the readily attainable small gratifications that surround him. The herd instinct (man *is* a gregarious animal) leads him to pattern his behavior and his expectations for himself after those who surround him, yet the

[2] Max Lerner, *America as Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), pp. 260–262 (italics added).

failure to want to explore any other possibilities remains in part a personal one.

Again, the social can be distinguished from the personal without dissociating the two. The machine culture with its standardization of things and routine, and the bourgeois sentiment with its security minded abhorrence of extremes combine to provide a material and social environment in which the easiest thing to do is to adjust desires, expectations, behavior, and personality so as not to appear different. It is not that the material and social environment set such rigid limits that innovation and pursuit of extremes are impossible; if this were so there would be no complaint about conformity, beyond daydreaming. Who complains of conforming with the law of gravity? Yet men do tend to impose upon themselves more severe restrictions than conditions dictate.

This penchant for prohibition, for taboo, has special force in the area of moral activity. Notice that the Ten Commandments are mostly negative. To keep from exploring the possibilities open to himself man frequently sets forth rigid rules that call upon all others to abide by the very conformity he has found comfortable. Dewey comments incisively on this point in *Human Nature and Conduct:*

> In the first place, morals cut off from positive roots in man's nature is [sic] bound to be mainly negative. Practical emphasis falls upon avoidance, escape of evil, upon not doing things, observing prohibitions. . . . Absence of social blame is the usual mark of goodness for it shows that evil has been avoided. Blame is most readily averted by being so much like everybody else that one passes unnoticed. Conventional morality is a drab morality, in which the only fatal thing is to be conspicuous. . . . In case of a pinch, the mass prefers to be good fellows rather than to be good men. Polite vice is preferable to eccentricity and ceases to be vice. Morals that professedly neglect human nature end by emphasizing those qualities of human nature that are most commonplace and average; they exaggerate the herd instinct to conformity.[3]

Neither mere extremism nor mere eccentricity automatically announces the presence of creativity or the absence of conformity. Just a few years ago, it was quite popular to say that beatniks were highly conformistic in their rituals—for example, wearing beards and foregoing baths. Like Bathless Groggins in *Abbie & Slats* or Moonbeam McSwine in *Li'l Abner,* the transvaluation which dictates that those who are "hip" will do the opposite of what "squares" do is merely to flaunt a visible banner of revolt. The army of the revolution is as uniform and uniformed as the army of the defenders—blue or grey, scarlet or forest green, armies are armies. Haller, Hesse's alter ego in *Steppenwolf,* Lerner, and Dewey mean something quite different when they contrast bourgeois moderation, mass-

[3] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Random House, 1950), pp. 4–5.

produced standardization, and the middle-class morality of avoidance with inner fires of intensity, the constructive pursuit of diversity, and the affirmation of uncommon character traits. Intensity that emerges as the single-minded pursuit of something thought to be of great worth may well result in the extraordinary behavior of a Steinmetz, who cared little how people scorned his shabby garb so long as he could ponder the mathematics of hysteresis. The pursuit of diversity, which drove Amon Hennessey to strive to fuse anarchism and Catholicism into a viable social alternative to fascism and democracy, may lead a man to walk in order to avoid paying gasoline taxes that support a government he opposes. The desire to protect uncommon character traits may lead André Gide to write in defense of homosexuality and to make his life a case-in-point by going out of his way to shock the timid and defy convention. Deep commitment, essential to creativity, is sometimes accompanied by extreme behavior; and wherever extreme behavior is ruled out, a man of principle may well be denied the opportunity to live according to his beliefs. Society is thereby denied the chance to witness the example such a life might have set, and the scope of social experience becomes unnecessarily narrow. When a man cannot live according to his beliefs it becomes almost impossible for him to extend and perfect his beliefs. Here is the point of friction between conformity and creativity. It is not that conformists have no ideas—they do. Rather, conformity minimizes the opportunity to carry through with the idea and find out what further thoughts it leads to.

Imagine Steinmetz, Hennessey, or Gide as modern business executives and the absurdity jumps out immediately. Steinmetz was merely tolerated as an indispensable queer genius in an isolated research laboratory. General Electric did not want his advice, just his formulas. In general our society wants creativity only in a nonadvisory capacity. There is much talk about creativity at higher levels of business, the military, and government, but the whole system is structured to keep it out, weed it out when it presents problems, or keep it isolated when it cannot be dispensed with. In a perceptive article, Henry Kissinger describes the consequences of valuing creativity only at certain levels or for certain purposes:

> One of the paradoxes of an increasingly specialized, bureaucratized society is that the qualities rewarded in the rise to eminence are less and less the qualities required once eminence is reached. . . . While the head of an organization requires a different outlook from that of his administrative subordinates, he must generally be recruited from their ranks.[4]

[4] Henry A. Kissinger, "The Policymaker and the Intellectual," *The Reporter*, XX: 30–5 (March 5, 1959), p. 30.

Ex-President Eisenhower offers a perfect case in point: the characteristics of obedience, cooperation, and amelioration of differences so essential to obtaining the favorable ratings from superiors that Army promotion depends on made him an indecisive President. Organization men make poor organizers, and people with creative talent make poor organization men. *Our society, then, asks for a peculiar thing: that genius make itself socially acceptable and that those who succeed by conforming blossom into creative leaders.*

It is a mistake to read Hesse, Lerner, and Dewey as anarchists who pose an either/or choice between conformity and creativity, order and chaos, society and the individual. No one denies the existence of conformity any more than anyone denies the existence of gravity; and while some conformity is necessary we have more than we need. The move toward greater conformity has become almost as inflexibly unidirectional as the second law of thermodynamics, which states that heat moves from the warmer body to the cooler and never the other way. Each step of social organization, from interdependent units of mass production to scheduled routines of work, distribution, and consumption, to negative rules governing moral conduct, begins as imaginative innovation and solidifies into an expectation to which all must conform. One invention like the automobile generates 10,000 laws governing its use. So long as one stands submerged within the system all these pressures seem necessary because the system itself supplies the explanations to justify them. But someone who exempts himself from the system for a moment, in order to look at what is happening, can catch a glimpse of how completely the opportunities for creativity are being eliminated. And needlessly so. Such an observer is the English poet, George Barker:

> The reason the poet has become the enemy of society (seen in terms of the overall scheme of things) is because only the enemy within the gates can report anything like the truth. It is to his advantage to do so, or he will very soon become converted to his own misrepresentation; and this is a definition of society. For the poet, society is an institution dedicated wholeheartedly to the pursuit of its own lies.[5]

Those who accept society's reasons for the need for conformity will never be able to understand why others oppose loyalty oaths, committees for the suppression of "filthy literature," chain domination of almost every newspaper in every major city, the control advertisers exercise over what shall be shown on television, the regimentation of junior executives in large corporations, or a Catholic index of forbidden books. Each institution has its own explanation why every single step in its organization is necessary.

[5] George Barker, "Poem in an Orange Wig," *Saturday Review*, XLIII:15 (October 22, 1960), p. 15.

And all together, these are the "lies" to which Barker refers. *That body of "lies" a people uses to justify conformity that is not proven indispensable by experimentation and empirical evidence adds up to its operative superstitions.*

The general custom is to associate superstitions with primitive tribes, not "modern" societies. Look, for example, at Sir James Frazer's excellent portrayal of the conformity imposed upon murderers by the Omaha Indians.

> When the life of the murderer was spared, he had to observe certain stringent rules for a period which varied from two to four years. He must walk barefoot, and he might eat no warm food, nor raise his voice, nor look around. He was compelled to pull his robe about him and to have it tied around his neck even in hot weather; he might not let it loose or fly open. He might not move his hands about, but had to keep them close to his body. He might not comb his hair, and it might not be blown about by the wind. When the tribe went out hunting, he was obliged to pitch his tent about a quarter of a mile from the rest of the people "lest the ghost of his victim should raise a high wind, which might cause damage. . . ." Here the reason alleged for keeping the murderer at a considerable distance from the hunters gives the clue to all the other restrictions laid on him: he was haunted and therefore dangerous.[6]

Somehow, since we no longer believe that the ghost of the victim inhabits or haunts the murderer, we feel superior to the Omahas. Yet the restrictions of life imprisonment for murderers who have been spared the gas chamber are in many ways more severe and cruel. Caryl Chessman helped expose some of the superstitions that keep many convinced that any punishment less severe would not only unleash a rabid dog of a murderer on society but would lead to wholesale slaughter because people would no longer be deterred by fear. Hollywood has made much of the myth of the mad-dog killer, and television's "Untouchables" makes much of the mad-dog detective, but anyone who has worked with prisoners in state penitentiaries soon sees that the prisoner of the "Little Caesar" type is actually rare.

Indeed, "superstitions" are always other people's beliefs. A superstition, like a lie, does not merit being believed. Attacking established beliefs on the grounds that they might really be superstitions is not a widespread or popular activity at any time. Yet much of the work of artists, of scientists, and especially of philosophers should begin on this basis. The process of realizing that an accepted belief may not be warranted is a gradual, albeit necessary, process if people are to grow in their capacity to tolerate differences in outlook and activity. Commitment to preserving established beliefs and currently accepted ways of doing things as the only ones tolerable lies at the root of conformity. In any enterprise some order is necessary; narrow

[6] James G. Frazer, *The New Golden Bough*, edited by Theodor H. Gaster (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1961), p. 99.

regimentation, however, can do more harm than good. *When men insist on more order than can be proven necessary, then they are asking for mere conformity.*

Conformity is not synonymous with order, only with the excess of it. Standardization of parts in production and regular hours for labor can be shown to be necessary for the manufacturing of cigarettes on a mass scale.[7] When the boss insists all salesmen smoke only the company brand he is demanding conformity in the name of loyalty. When he insists that employees' wives smoke only the company brand he is being absurd. Yet managers do *demand* this, and make no joke about it. Men have lost their jobs, or quit, because of such demands. Here clearly an excess of compliance is called for: conformity.

Another clear case of order that serves no demonstrable purpose but vanity is the military salute. Note the superstition that supports it: one salutes the uniform, not the officer in it. But enlisted men wear uniforms that no one salutes. So it is with Stateside soldiering. Overseas, when things get rough and a little imagination and creativity becomes essential, among the first military requirements to be dropped are saluting, parades, Saturday inspections, and a thousand other items that represent mere conformity. If they were so all-fired instrumental in making good soldiers out of raw recruits they would be insisted upon even more rigorously as the situation became more difficult. Every private knows that the showmanship of military discipline is a sham, and the discipline that matters most in combat has nothing to do with polished shoes, taut bunks, pressed uniforms, smart salutes, or shaved cheeks. What makes the career military man the civilian's goat is not any want of courage, for he frequently has it in abundance, or any lack of technical or tactical skill, for he is, at his best, a competent specialist. It is his love of conformity for its own sake. He has civilian counterparts throughout business, teaching, the clergy, and the professions, though they may have to be less obvious about their conformity. Why must the sons of soldiers always address a male adult as "sir"? Respect? Nonsense. Conformity—the excess of order!

CREATIVITY

When creativity is viewed as the opposite of conformity a tendency to link one with chaos and the other with order confuses discussion. Just as conformity begins where necessary order ends, hence admitting the need for order and organization, so does creativity extend beyond available organization and order. But organization and order, the disciplines that provide the springboard, are as necessary to creativity as air is to maintaining human life. What creativity requires is a willingness to risk, and in this it *is* opposite to conformity.

Hesse speaks of the bourgeois as a creature of weak impulse unwilling to risk the pursuit of *anything* beyond the limits of immediate comfort. That

[7] "How necessary are cigarettes?" is a question of a different order.

comfort takes the form of physical convenience, economic security, avoidance of controversy, and the "peace of mind" that troubles itself only with trivia. Haller, Hesse's leading character in *Steppenwolf*, for all his human weaknesses, is the spiritual opposite of the bourgeois. He lives in the constant agony and anguish of a man who senses that life holds deeper meaning, which can be sought only by risking total destruction with almost no more hope of discovery than of escaping death:

> "This: 'Most men will not swim before they are able to.' Isn't it witty? Naturally, they won't swim! They are born for the solid earth, not water. And naturally they won't think. They are made for life, not for thought. Yes, and he who thinks, what's more, he who makes thought his business, he may go far in it, but he has bartered the solid earth for the water all the same, and one day he will drown." [8]

Hesse's Haller has his counterparts in Dostoevski's *Notes from the Underground* and Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*. In each there is a willingness to risk near-certain destruction in pursuit of what most people would find foolish if they thought about it at all, for the pursuit involves breaking almost every canon of conformist decency. Melville's Captain Ahab is a man possessed by his passion to kill the white whale, damn the cost to himself and others. In contemporary American letters there is no more sensitive portrayal of single-minded obsession than Salinger's Franny: the Jesus prayer takes possession of her mind the way a hermit crab inhabits the shell of a sea snail—by consuming the original tenant. In both the characters of the fiction of extreme risk and the commitment the artist makes in writing such works lies a lesson about creativity which John Updike points out in connection with Salinger's treatment of the Glass family:

> This seems to me the nub of the trouble: Salinger loves the Glasses more than God loves them. He loves them too exclusively. Their invention has become a hermitage for him. He loves them to the detriment of artistic moderation. . . .
>
> The Glass saga, as he has sketched it out, potentially contains great fiction. When all reservations have been entered in the correctly unctuous and apprehensive tone, about the direction he has taken, it remains to acknowledge that it *is* a direction, and that the refusal to rest content, the willingness to risk excess on behalf of one's obsessions, is what distinguishes artists from entertainers and what makes some artists adventurers on behalf of us all.[9]

Indeed, Updike could have been commenting on his own willingness to risk excess in *The Centaur* and in *Poorhouse Fair*.

[8] Herman Hesse, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

[9] John Updike, "Anxious Days for the Glass Family," *The New York Times Book Review* (Sept. 17, 1961). Also in *Assorted Prose* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1965).

Any inspection of these or other works of art will dispel the notion that creativity is an ally of chaos. The discipline of the writer, be he poet, essayist, novelist, dramatist, or philosopher, in language alone ranks on a par with the mastery of higher mathematics—even though mathematicians with little sensitivity to words like to think otherwise. What makes it seem otherwise is that the courses needed to gain competence (though not genius) in mathematics can be taken in five or six years of university work. But no series of courses in writing can guarantee even competence. The writer disciplines himself on the works of other writers. This sometimes makes it seem that his first novel results from "pure inspiration" and untutored natural talent, thus fortifying the superstition [10] that any attempt to subject the artist to a training regime would destroy his creativity. In one sense this is true; he must select his own regimen and pursue it his own way. When one talks to writers, it is amazing how many have read most of the same works and taken this or that variation of the same lessons from them. One of the most dangerous aspects of conformity occurs precisely at this point because it attacks creativity directly. Academicians who recognize the need for order in art use the fact that writers do read the same works to support their theories that creativity can be taught like any other subject. Hence, they extend order beyond necessity to specify the hundred basic books, or the mathematics-like principles of formal design, or the studio routines required for painters, sculptors, dancers, and actors. This produces writing, painting, sculpting, or dancing talent of a technical nature not different from the technical level of competence that can be expected of the well-trained engineer. It goes some way toward supplying part of the order that anyone who will be creative must carry with him to his task. But because it is an extension of order beyond necessity—and hence, a demand for conformity—it imposes a rigid structure that imprisons talent within an established point of view, making it doubly difficult for creativity to emerge. Those who see it coming, and have the nerve, may find it necessary to leave college to keep their talents from becoming trapped.

Most conformity attacks creativity indirectly by occupying and holding the grounds upon which the creative activity might have been carried out. If all the lots and playgrounds are marked for baseball and in use by little league teams, he who invents football has little chance to develop the game and perfect its rules. With each aspect of life extending the demand for order beyond necessity, even those who are willing to take risks on behalf of their obsessions find little or no room left them. Instead of pouring their energy into creative activities they must hack away at the crabgrass of conformity just to secure a small patch of dirt on which to rest from exhaustion. And when the longing for comfort, security, and the quiet resulting from lack of thought becomes a national pre-occupation,

[10] Creativity has its superstitions too; we call the study of them "aesthetics."

the impulse to risk so necessary to creativity becomes isolated in a few individuals. Then creativity, and the creative man, become a threat. The willingness to take a risk appears so abnormal that it is regarded as insane.

If conformity is the extension of order beyond necessity in defense of established belief and practice, then creativity, whatever else it may be, involves the disclosure of neglected, overlooked, or new ways of ordering. This sets up a very peculiar relationship between conformity and creativity. Creativity, again far from being antagonistic toward order as such, presents order. But creativity does not defend what it presents. This task falls to critics, politicians, or others who find worth in the created product, be it a painting created by Mondrian or a political-economic-social ideology created by Marx. Creativity does not, cannot, extend order beyond necessity. It can overextend itself and fail as a creation. It is in the utilization of the order presented that the overextension of order that is conformity takes place. So long as the created order is applied within the bounds of necessity it has no natural enemies, hence needs no defense. Once presented by creativity, order takes on a life of its own.

Those who use one or another form of order frequently have a sincere regard for how it improves things over what they were before. Impressed by its worth, they develop strong loyalty to that form of order, a loyalty that frequently overshadows their dedication to the creativity that gave it birth. Mussolini, committed to the order of fascism, and Tolstoy, committed to the order of religion, found their particular forms of order so useful within the limits of necessity that they began to see them as necessary everywhere. Order replaces weaker structures and fills the vacuum where no structure has become apparent. With the best of motives men extend order so far that others begin to see that it is running wild, so far beyond necessity as to be tyranny. Conformity can be a tyranny of a small minority or the tyranny of the majority, but whoever engages in it, it remains an excess of order beyond demonstrable necessity. As with superstition no one sees his own extension of order as tyranny; to the tyrant it is necessary and those who oppose it are perverse. In the process of extending order beyond necessity it becomes necessary to build defenses against those who would struggle to keep it confined to need alone. The defenses grow much as towns grew in the middle ages. First a wall is built to protect the castle and the town. Then a moat is dug to protect the wall. Next the trees beyond the moat must be felled to make it harder to cross the moat. Soon armies cross the plain to slay the males in each household lest an army be raised against them. The whole process that accompanies the extension of order beyond necessity has a built-in conservatism. Meanwhile, confronted with this conservatism, creativity finds itself as unwelcome as the king who, returning from a crusade, finds a usurper in permanent possession of the throne.

Conformity, the extension of order beyond necessity, carries within it a conservatism that defends a particular form of order against other forms of order that creativity presents. Being defenseless, creativity must retreat before conformity. When the extension of a particular form of order intrudes far enough into most areas of living creativity has no more room to function than astrology has in modern astronomy. We can obviously get along without astrology; but just as obviously we cannot get along without artistic, scientific, philosophical, and cultural creativity.

Creativity cannot undertake its own defense, for as soon as creativity presents what it has to offer its task is finished. So the problem lies more with the control of conformity. *The extension of order must be made to justify itself at each step and to retreat where justification cannot be found.* Further, the conservatism that gives conformity its arrogance must be turned to tolerance that encourages presentation of new forms of order.

The problem has its most dramatic modern exemplification in the opposite attitudes and temperaments of the military man and the artist. The common opposition is between art and science, or the artist and the engineer, or art and commerce. And in so far as science, engineering, and commerce act along military lines the comparison holds up. Yet science and engineering, at least, have a creative component that such a confrontation does not adequately account for. The military, by contrast, is about as free from creativity as a human institution can be made to be. And this is so precisely because in the military order is extended as far as man has been able to advance it.

The military translates order into routine and drills until it becomes habit, then drills some more. Habit must be so deeply instilled that it operates at a time of crisis when thinking might produce hesitation and delay. Order is extended to every controllable activity, from tactical maneuvers to dress parade. At bottom, for all the applause of individual initiative that saved the day here or there, the military man appreciates departure from routine only in retrospect, since it would seem foolish to condemn what succeeded. As he looks to the future the military leader attempts to cover every conceivable possibility by routine. The maximization of routine minimizes accident. For this the military prefers a machine to a man and it makes its men as much like machines as their constitutions can withstand without malfunctioning. This spirit of automation has operated in every known army, with the possible exception of guerilla teams. Certainly the military knew the basic principles of regulation ages before scientific management brought time and motion studies to industry to make production efficient.

Accident, the unanticipated, frustrates the military leader because it calls for action not covered by his extension of order, and accident brings

with it the overwhelming possibility of error. And in the moment of crisis error may well be fatal. Effectively, anything that lies beyond the scope of extended order is defined as error. Conformity sets the inner limits of error, and since creativity lies outside those bounds it must be regarded as error also.

The soldier lives each of his days within the confines of overbearing conformity so as to be in perpetual readiness for a crisis that may come at any moment or not at all. The leader projects the crisis as a fact, however; all that is uncertain is how and when it will occur. Thus the soldier must forgo as much of his chance for operating beyond the bounds of conformity as a human can sacrifice. "Creative soldiering" is a self-contradiction. Whatever a soldier may do that is creative cannot be soldiering as it is defined. The soldier lives for the moment of crisis, and his whole life is ordered so he will follow a routine when it occurs.

Basically, much of this kind of crisis attitude underlies the conformity the ordinary citizen accepts in his quest for something he calls security. Security lies with the organization that will face the crisis for him. He will do what it takes to remain a member in good standing of the organization that protects him. As with the soldier so with the citizen: the degree to which he can be made to fear a crisis is the degree to which he will accept the routines laid out for him. For the military man the region beyond the extension of order is error. For the civilian that region beyond conformity is danger. Whether it be called error or danger, for many the no-man's land beyond conformity is to be avoided. Creativity is for fools, possibly noble fools, but fools nevertheless.

When the bulk of effort goes into perfecting routines to keep in readiness for a crisis there is little energy, less opportunity, and no incentive to be creative. When accident is so feared that all effort goes into extending order so as to eliminate the possibility of an accident conformity knows no limits. For all the seemingly enlightened talk of military men on behalf of creativity, they remain committed to a program that has the elimination of creativity as its final consequence. It is this addiction to conformity that differentiates the military mind from the artistic mind.

The artist neither lives in a state of readiness to meet an impending crisis, nor does he fear accident as the occasion in which error triumphs. Having taken up residence beyond the bounds of conformity he has learned to live with accident as sensitively as Thoreau lived with trees and rain at Walden Pond. From such a position he can look back on the sphere of necessary order, the larger sphere of conformity that surrounds it, and the no-man's land not yet reduced to recognizable order which surrounds both the sphere of conformity and himself. From such a perspective he can present forms of order which those within the spheres of necessity and conformity cannot detect any more than a prisoner in solitary confinement can discover the floor plan of the jail from his windowless cell. Further, as resident of ground to which conformity has not yet extended, he can find forms of

order—sometimes called beauty—among the myriad events that the conformist knows only as accident. To the artist these are not accidents at all, any more than any other natural event is accident. They are the materials with which creativity, which goes beyond criticism and restructuring of established order, must work. What the conformist calls accident and the military man regards as error may be just the catalyst that makes it possible for the artist to present a new form of order. The whole purpose of discipline in the artist's self-development is to allow him to capitalize on what others call accident, and to use it to help him present an order not previously appreciated. To the same degree that the military man fears accident as the source of fatal error, and accepts routine so as to have established order carry him through a crisis, so does the artist welcome the unanticipated natural events beyond the limits of extended order and reject any routine that would reduce them to already established order, thus depriving him of the opportunity to find new order from them.

Yet the artist is never completely beyond the bounds of conformity. He lives in society, and accepts much of the excess of order, even while he revolts against bits and pieces of it by failing to be punctual or by growing a beard. Were he, however, to accept the military man's fear of accident, and submit his life to rituals designed to bring order to crisis, he would forgo any chance of confronting any aspect of experience with the artist's love for the unexpected. It is in this respect that teachers, scientists, philosophers, indeed all original thinkers, must be artists. Creativity is not limited to painters, poets, novelists, musicians, and sculptors. It is just that those engaged in the fine arts provide us with the best examples of a creative person's necessary revolt against conformity. In the opposite attitudes toward the unexpected exhibited by the soldier and the artist the problem receives its most dramatic illumination. The soldier must obey orders no matter how far they extend beyond necessity. The soldier must exhibit a maximum of obedience. This is called doing his duty. By contrast, the artist must exhibit a very minimum of obedience. One good indication of how far order has been extended beyond necessity is in the bizarre behavior that artists, bohemians, beats, hipsters, and angry young men can get away with. Violations of necessary order bring quick, severe, and inexorable punishment more surely than crime brings on the law. Artists, bohemians, beats, hipsters, and angry young men do not flirt with suicide, generally. They keep their activities within the bounds of conformity and run up against necessary order through accident, ignorance, or excesses of inertia, not by interest and design. Criminals, anarchists, and zealots attack necessary order and usually pay an extreme price. Today, order is extended so far beyond necessity that those who choose can attack conformity in unnumbered places and suffer little more than casual disfavor. We like to call this freedom, or tolerance, but it is not: if we had freedom and tolerance order would not have been extended beyond necessity in the first place. Virtue is not vice spelled backward.

Conformity, the extension of order beyond necessity, is social fat. The less fat the healthier the society. Today, there is so much fat it is almost impossible to feel the shape of the small core of necessary order. The general problems of freedom and tolerance involve a reducing diet that shrinks away the social fat of conformity so the solid core of necessary order can be clearly seen and used as the basis for defining liberty.

Within that larger problem, the issue of creativity and conformity involves the contrasting attitudes of soldiers and artists, businessmen, and philosophers. The soldier, the businessman and the man in the street have such uncritical respect for established order that they fail to see that it has spread like lava from a volcano to consume the ground once inhabited by artists, scientists, and philosophers. Make no mistake, conformity is merely a euphemism for a form of tyranny.[11] As with the obvious excess of order we call tyranny, so it is with its less visible counterpart called conformity: the more room it occupies, the less opportunity for creativity.

In a society where everyone grows up in such constant daily contact with conformity the basic problem lies in getting individuals to recognize what it is in them that makes conformity congenial. *Thus the issue of conformity and creativity boils down to making the individual understand the potential for diversity implicit in human beings and hence in himself.* Only then will men begin to appreciate what is lost when conformity is permitted to grow so huge and so powerful that it minimizes creativity.

At bottom the issue can best be approached through an examination of the philosophy of human nature, as Hesse began it in this criticism of the bourgeois. He found this latter a creature of weak impulses, anxious, fearful of giving himself away, and easy to rule. Such a creature seems carefully patterned after a sheep of the herd, perhaps with just a trace of the easiest victim in the jungle. Indeed, *each of the views of society has its counterpart in concepts of human nature.* The herd suggests that man is an animal with beastly appetites. The jungle analogy begins with man the animal, but concepts of human nature carry it quite beyond to man as noble savage. The marketplace with its bargaining gives us man as the shopper and shopkeeper. From the organismic view of society comes man as the shaper of his destiny.

While a social philosophy suggests the basic context for a concept of human nature, the notions of what man is really like soon grow beyond the limitations of their original conception to take on characteristics all their own. While the bounds of order found to be necessary would ordinarily rest with social philosophy, the excess of that order that breeds (and is) conformity reaches beyond social philosophy to draw strength from concepts of human nature. Each analogy of human nature—man the beast, man the noble savage, man the shopper, and man the shaper—has

[11] What makes it harder to oppose is that conformists are often "nice guys." It would help if they all looked like Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, or Stalin.

something to say about what order is necessary by virtue of man's being what he is. Each of these analogies about the nature of human nature seeks to set out the pickets to mark how far order *must* extend. Only beyond such a line can creativity begin.

THE ANALOGY OF MAN AS A BEAST

Interesting enough, when man is looked upon as a trainable beast the emphasis falls upon his faults, deficiencies, and ineptness. From Periclean Greece to the Holy Roman Empire the ancient dualism separated mind from body, soul from appetite, and spirit from flesh. In the hierarchy of worth from sensation to reason, lust to logic, and sin to salvation the functions of the body were likened to the activities of animals and viewed as something to be overcome. He who will not control his physical appetites, impulses, instincts, desires, and drives, however vigorous and voracious they are, is victim of his animal nature. The stronger the animal in man the weaker he is as human being. Since most men would behave as beasts, giving in to the temptations of the flesh or exploiting their animal strength, they should not be left to their own devices; body, appetite, and flesh have to be brought under the control of mind, soul, and spirit. Those who lack the reason, logic, or insight to build for themselves a will that can govern their animal nature in accord with the wisdom of men and the wishes of God must, for their own good, both immediate and eternal, have certain codes of conduct and rules of behavior laid down for them. Man must be made to conform. Order must be extended to each area of conduct, lest man's animal nature rise up to carry him into sin and beyond salvation.

For such men there is little question of creativity in avenues of ordinary conduct, because order seems necessary in every phase of their daily activities. Since laws at any given time are relatively few, limited, and specific, and since customs are loose, vague, and not entirely binding, neither can sufficiently cage the animal beast within the human breast. What is needed is a set of rules as binding as law and as extensive as custom—a set of commandments.

ORDER BY COMMANDMENT

The Ten Commandments seek to extend order into moral activity. "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," and "Thou shalt not lie," for example, can be viewed as unambiguous directives which prescribe certain things never to be done under any circumstances, or they can be seen as wholly ambiguous, vague, and general statements which prescribe an attitude toward certain activities but apply only under certain conditions.

If they mean *never* kill, steal, or lie *regardless* of circumstances, all we need know to judge the worth of an act is whether it will lead to any one

of the three. The literal application of them as absolute principles leaves no room for interpretation. They extend order fully, and no man bound by them can let the beast within him triumph, even if he is killed as a result of not killing, starves to death for not stealing bread, or betrays his nation by telling the truth when asked a question by an enemy commander. Viewed literally as absolutes, never to be tempered by conditions, they leave only one choice—acceptance or rejection: and acceptance almost always means violating them at some time or other. Once accepted, so long as the meanings of "to kill," "to steal," and "to lie" are clear they provide an absolute standard for assessing what must or must not be done in certain situations.

On the other hand, if the commandments are taken as general guides to conduct which must be tempered by interpretation to allow killing in time of war, stealing when faced with starvation, or lying to avoid becoming a traitor, even then man as beast cannot be left free to decide for himself when the rule applies and when it does not, or what meaning to give it in diverse situations. There must be a seer, a priest, or other arbiter—someone free of the animal frailties of human nature—to tell ordinary humans what to do. Wherever the issue is important, unguided choice is so likely to lead to error that order in the form of absolute commandments, or in the form of absolute authority which interprets the commandments, must be extended to cover the situation. Concerning moral matters, there is little to which this extension of order is not necessary. And to make the beastly side of man conform there must be a show of some kind of force: physical or spiritual punishment. The threat of such punishment creates an indispensable fear—indispensable because if man did not fear other men, the law, or God he would give free vent to animal appetites, thus visiting moral chaos upon society. So goes the logic of conformity.

The teacher, among others, stands as the visible agent of that authority and need feel no embarrassment about using threats in the name of discipline to obtain conformity. There is little room for creativity in moral matters, and quite possibly all matters are ultimately moral. First and foremost, the beast in man must be trained. If there be room for anything beyond obedience training, so much the better. Just as dogs may be taught to do some cute tricks, so can the child be trained as a performer. When poorly trained the dog leaves droppings about the house and in his wild state he bites, and we have all seen children with just such beastly habits. Such habits are intolerable, unnecessary, and bad for the child. Until bad habits are under control it is simply folly to talk about something above and beyond them. Slobs cannot create.

THE CHILD

Bearing the guilt of original sin, afflicted with strong body appetites, victim of habits born in a struggle for survival, the child emerges as a rather

unsavory beast much in need of training. The four "C's"—custom, culture, civilization, and the church—all represent man's efforts to triumph over his biological nature. The school, then, must take him from a family that decreasingly succeeds in training him properly and process him for twelve years, more or less, to make sure society does not receive a wild and uncontrollable fully grown animal. Custom, culture, civilization, and church all stand for the order expressed by manners, mores, and conscience. Since this triumph of order over chaos represents the victory of mind over body, soul over flesh, and spirit over appetite there can be no wincing from the need to extend order throughout activities of body, flesh, and appetite. These must conform to the wishes of mind, soul, and spirit, or the child's human nature is forever under the control and domination of his animal nature. Since the two are at war in each individual, the child can only be "free" when reason and will unite in the self-control called discipline. Freedom, like peace, is what follows *after* victory by the right forces.

This means that the teacher must impose external discipline until it is clear that the child has himself under full control; then one can ease the pressure and stop threatening because the child will be able to control himself. Any fear about the extension of order beyond necessity cannot refer to the control of body, flesh, and appetite, for morality demands conformity where they are concerned, since these are the areas of carnal sin. Any criticism of the extension of order beyond necessity must apply only to matters of mind, soul, and spirit, for these are the only areas of permissible and desirable creativity.

Yet there is a danger in this reasoning. Just as fear and corporal punishment in the training process can literally break a puppy's spirit, so can it break a child's spirit. The problem of discipline is to find that delicate balance that produces conformity in body, flesh, and appetite, harnessing the beast within, yet keeps it healthy as a vehicle to carry the mind, soul, and spirit to the furthest expenditures of effort—as a horse will carry its rider fastest and furthest with only a touch of the spur and the whip. This goal is epitomized in the athlete's creed "a clean mind in a sound body." A well-trained child will not let his bodily discomforts interfere with his ability to concentrate on his lessons any more than a good athlete will let the pain of his muscles keep him from winning a foot race. Once the distractions of body, flesh, and appetite are subordinated to the routines of study, the discipline of desire, and the rules of moral conduct, the individual can concentrate, feel, and act without worrying that his base nature will betray his better nature. Only with the triumph of mind, soul, and spirit is creativity possible. Any attempt to circumvent the extension of order to body, flesh, and appetite is merely the all too human, but quite objectionable, struggle of his animal nature to have its way. ("Doin' what comes Nat'rally" is almost always sinful, fattening, or illegal.)

The animal view of human nature invests man with inherent weaknesses and hands responsibility for his earthly improvement over to society and its institutions, usually acting under divine decree. This means that any room for creativity has to be a surplus over and beyond the complete control of his animal nature and the necessary order of mind, spirit, and soul as outlined by the requirements of salvation through such powerful social institutions as the church. If the church orders certain works censored because they whet the appetite and warp the soul it is done because the majority of men need such protection.

Rejecting the animal notion of natural corruption, and replacing it with a concept of original virtue, Rousseau and his followers offered a picture of man as a noble savage, who is most nearly perfect in a state of nature where he is free from the corrupting influence of society. Every vice, weakness, and infirmity ascribed to man as animal was removed from human nature and assigned to custom, culture, civilization, and institutions like the church. Society was to blame for corrupting man. Every virtue, strength, and positive attribute formerly assigned to society was transferred to original human nature, and could be found almost perfectly intact in the noble savage not yet corrupted by society. Consequently, just about everything that had been thought necessary in order to keep body, flesh, and appetite suppressed now became an unbearable oppression designed to visit the infirmities of an already corrupt society upon a defenseless human nature. Instead of imposing rules of conduct that would let the individual pass unnoticed in society by making him as corrupt as the next man, the purpose of education now became to keep him untainted by the ways of society so he might have the best chance to let his natural goodness emerge unspoiled. Instead of imposing order by commandment there must be a withholding of commandments, the better to let the order of human nature emerge—for all social organization is the extension of order beyond necessity. Life should be continuously creative; that is, always presenting new order without defense as it emerges from an inherently good human nature. The noble savage, it was romantically envisioned, had just such a relation with physical nature. Far from being a beast in need of training, he stood as the only free aristocrat from which we could all take a lesson. He, and only he, represented the true order of nature.

THE ORDER OF NATURE

When God has imposed a plan upon nature, and man must intuit or have revealed to him the Divine Will, society stands between the best and worst in man as the only civilizing agent. But when nature is seen as complete in itself because of a plan self-contained within it, man must be restored to his rightful place within nature at the expense of his artificial, and hence alien, connection with society.

Wherever man tampers with physical nature, from introducing prickly pear trees into the deserts of Australia to insisting, as missionaries did, that African natives sweat to death in Mother Hubbards to keep from exposing their nakedness, the result is catastrophe. Similarly, wherever society interferes with the natural expression of order corruption follows. If nature requires that man be monogamous he will be so as surely as an apple will fall to earth when dropped. No law will be needed. And if nature does not require this of him, any law that tries to make him so will work against his survival. Most attempts at social order are artificial impositions of alien conditions which keep man from becoming what it is his nature to be. No wonder man in society is corrupt, enslaved, guilt ridden, neurotic, miserable, unhealthy, and discontent. The whole notion of what order is necessary for man to live communally has been misconstrued so that his natural instincts will be repressed, not liberated; his freedom can be usurped, not explored; his strength used for the benefit of others, not himself; his inventiveness suppressed, not encouraged. Society now stands as an instrument for achieving the extension of order beyond necessity. Nature represents the only necessary order. The noble savage, whose life is in harmony with the demands of nature, stands as the only model of a man free to explore the invention of new order. He is the only truly creative individual. Only when children can be raised to be as free of the demands of society as the savage will they be free to create. Only then will the social arrangements for communal living begin to reflect the order immanent in nature, and only then will man be free to be good. The school can begin by insulating the child from the corrupting influence of existing societies and by acquainting him with his only natural environment, nature itself.

THE CHILD

Of course, the child cannot be restored to a full "state of nature," since only such as Romulus and Remus could survive under such conditions. Further, the school will receive the child already warped from those social forces that have found their way into the family setting. The school *can* keep from compounding this damage and go some distance toward correcting it. First, there can be a conscious withholding of commandments and moral advice in favor of letting the child explore behavioral possibilities and come to his own terms with their consequences. This view sees human nature as naturally expressive, innately curious, and potentially inventive. It holds, further, that these characteristics are so rare in adults because society's demand for conformity has crushed or warped the child's natural tendencies and replaced them with apathy, indifference, and the habit of imitating. It opposes the notion that the child must be trained to virtue or even that it can be. Just as a flower growing in the forest is most beautiful without cultivation or other human attention, far outshining the same species raised in a hothouse, so is the socially unspoiled child of

natural impulse gentle, strong, healthy, spontaneous, generous, and loving —in short, beautiful and good because free.

The adult counterpart, the civilized man referred to as a noble savage —from Robinson Crusoe through Swiss Family Robinson to majestic American Indian chiefs—all created a child-like image of the natural king of the forest entirely at home in situations where the cultivated European could hardly survive, much less keep his dignity. Society made man unfit to live in nature, and who would not exchange the beauty of Walden Pond for the slums of Paris, London, New York, or Boston. The child must not be kept penned in classrooms, but must be brought back to nature, not merely as observer but as participant. To adjust to society the child is required to adopt every vice known to man—cheat and steal at business, kill and maim to protect property, become servile in the face of authority. The noble savage who fished the streams and hunted the forest had skill, sensitivity, courage, and honor. He fought to the death in bloody battles because he could not bend to a way of life so dehumanizing. He learned the order of nature, and nature cannot extend order beyond necessity. Living in harmony with nature, free from the will of other men, he alone among men did not have to conform. If the child cannot quite achieve this, at least the school can keep from accepting and passing on society's order, all of which, because it is artificial and extends beyond nature, is an extension beyond necessity. Society had become a synonym for conformity. Nature was the only arena of necessary order. All creativity that discovers order beyond nature must take place at the expense of the conformity demanded in the name of society, thus the school must defy society to honor nature. The child must be brought in harmony with nature if he is to have the opportunity to become creative. The school becomes a place of secret rebellion where children are allowed to become what they have the potential to be—through encouragement without indoctrination, expression with minimum restraint.

Biological evolution was extended into human nature to suggest natural growth which, somehow, could not be other than good. Of course, it would *seem* bad to those adults already so warped by social pressure as to substitute corruption for virtue. Indeed, the child of nature might seem poorly trained to live in the house of society, soiling here, breaking furniture there. But he was not really meant to live in that house. He was meant to be free as the noble savage who drinks from a pure and dazzling stream without having to ask anyone's permission. He does not dump his garbage and body waste in that stream and pollute it so he cannot drink from it again. Only man in society desecrates nature.

A child at one with nature is at one with himself, committed to necessary order as surely as objects are to falling. He will have no wish or need to be a purely destructive animal or a servile keeper of small shops. He will achieve the same magnificence of bodily health and mental serenity the noble savage enjoys. This is the purpose of life and can be achieved by

removing him from the extension of order beyond necessity, which is society, which is conformity. Then man can live entirely within a natural setting where he is free to invent new order, be creative, or see how well it fits him to increase and improve the harmony he already enjoys with nature. The school, the teacher, his parents, and society itself must grant him permission to become what it is his right to be. *This is the essence of philosophic permissivism in education.* With it the child will not become beastly. He will be noble but not savage; he will be a man.

THE ANALOGY OF MAN AS A SHOPPER

Man as animal has appetites and impulses that drive his body to excesses of gluttony and lust that only a well-disciplined will and a thoroughly conditioned mind can control. Control is a prerequisite to creativity. In man, the natural way leads to the loss of control and chaos. The social way is the orderly way. By contrast, the noble savage must reject the artificial, hence harmful, control society would impose, and restore himself to the natural way. Harmony with nature is a prerequisite to creativity. Gluttony and lust are the names society gives to natural activities in order to make man believe he needs to accept the commandments of others as expressions of wisdom. The whole process of socializing consists of making the individual deny his natural, healthy, good impulses and accept the unnatural, harmful, corrupt wishes of others already victimized. Such conformity is a contraception that keeps men sterile. When it has gone far enough creativity is literally inconceivable. No animal view of human nature is as pessimistic as the noble savage view is optimistic. By taking a narrower look at human nature, the view of man as a shopper seeks to avoid both extremes.

As a shopper, neither animal nor noble, man is a computer of odds, percentages, possibilities, and probabilities who weighs the cost against the gain to determine what he will buy. But unlike the shopper in the commercial marketplace, human nature does not deal in tangible merchandise; rather, it bargains in units of pleasure and pain, pursuing the former and avoiding the latter. Every choice for something involves a forfeiting of something else. Man as shopper will choose what he expects will give him pleasure and avoid what promises to give him pain.

ORDER BY CALCULATION

If the key to explaining human choice-making behavior is pleasure seeking and pain avoidance, then human nature must be much more like a computer than either an animal or a noble savage. The animal in man plunges ahead wildly in single-minded pursuit, oblivious to pain and pleasure in his frenzy of lust or fear. In animal man the pull and push of pleasure and pain might exist in such monolithic extremes that they could lead him to destroy himself inadvertently. Man does this, but not often.

By contrast, the noble savage who escapes society's dictates to find his personal harmony as a part of physical and biological nature accepts an asceticism as unnatural as it is necessary under conditions of forest or jungle life. Each time a more advanced society introduces its new trinkets and conveniences he willingly accepts them and works hard to acquire more, indicating an eagerness to gain even the simple pleasures of a string of glass beads which his natural environment does not provide. Only a complex society can provide such comforts on an extensive scale. Man must accept the conditions that make their production possible and learn to bargain with his talent, skill, energy, time, and resources. Knowing the rules of bargaining he can shop around for the best deals, thus exchanging the pain of obedience, effort, and time spent working for the pleasure of food, shelter, and leisure.

If he cannot know for certain what will bring pleasure or pain, at least he can make shrewd guesses. If it can be assumed that no rational man willingly chooses pain over pleasure, whatever he does must be understood in terms of anticipated pleasure outweighing or at least balancing anticipated pain. A criminal chooses burglary because he thinks *he* can get away with stealing something that can be exchanged for more pleasure than he could gain any other way. He risks great punishment in anticipation of great pleasure. The man who kills a grocer for $12 in the cash register expected first, not to have to kill; second, to find $1,200; third, to escape; fourth, to go on until he had enough pleasure units stored up; and fifth, to give up crime and enjoy them.

This means that the individual must somehow be able to calculate in a very subtle way amounts of pleasure and pain previously enjoyed or endured, presently being experienced, and to be had in the future. At least these units of pleasure to be sought, and pain to be avoided, must be grossly similar for a given activity from past to present to future for a single individual, or else he would have no way of anticipating from past and present experience. Further, it is usually assumed they are rather similar among different individuals for any given event, thus enabling us to anticipate what others are likely to do on the basis of what we would do under similar conditions. And finally, this view takes for granted that quite different events can be assessed against a single scale of pleasure and pain, so that, for example, a man can choose between having a troublesome tooth pulled or buying his son a baseball glove for today's little league game when he has money for one or the other but not both, and no credit. This process of calculation focuses attention on items, activities, and events that can be equated into units of pleasure and pain by linking them to a monetary system. An hour's work may cost $2.60 worth of pain, but with that amount in cash, one can buy the pleasure of a pint of whiskey or admission and popcorn for two at the movies (assuming this is how one chooses to define pain and pleasure). In the economics of pleasure and pain every man has his price, but only the weakest of men measure that

price in money. As brainwashing in communist prison camps suggested, when the barter system deals directly in units of pleasure and pain, the discomfort of a fellow prisoner's disapproval can break men prepared to withstand physical torture.

Men conform, then, because it promises them more pleasure than other forms of behavior. Order is extended beyond the limits of what might be needed for mere survival only because this added extension promises more creature comforts by providing the shopper more alternatives to choose among. When order actually does extend beyond a point of diminishing returns, the increment of unnecessary pain will gradually lead to the correction of such error, else the society will fall into decline. With each individual shopping for the best bargains of pleasure over pain, a society will eventually find a balance based on full and efficient utilization of available resources. Such a balance is optimum order for that society. Conformity, the extension of order beyond necessity *for such an optimum balance* of pleasure over pain, is merely the result of error in judgment.

Conformity must not be confused with routine. Routine is any convenient and widely used way of acquiring pleasure and avoiding pain; routine is merely a path of least resistance that most people follow because it is easy and reliable. Conformity is bad routine, something that purports to be convenient and reliable but turns out to provide more pain and less pleasure than other available routes. Conformity is a bad bargain, wasteful, more costly than need be.

Creativity is an improvement upon established routine, the discovery of new order that increases the balance of pleasure over pain. Creativity, then, is the way to a better bargain than one had before. It increases the yield of pleasure as surely as irrigation increases the yield of crops. Yet creativity, like all invention, requires investment and risk. There must be the willingness to forgo available pleasures immediately attainable through routine in order to explore new paths in the hope of finding shorter routes which will then become a new generation's routine. Just as a few men might find more pleasure in viewing the rainbow than in owning the pot of gold at the end of it, so do a few men spend their lives searching for new routes without seeking the pleasures to which they lead.

But this is not for most men. Most men are shoppers in a much narrower sense and consumers of available pleasures in a much more concrete way. Thus, the school should be a place where most men learn to shop well, so their lives will represent a favorable balance of pleasure over pain. To be good shoppers they must be able to weigh pleasure against pain so they know a bargain when they see one.

THE CHILD

The child need not be taught to shop for pleasure, since it is his human nature to do so, but rather how to do it efficiently. Nor can it be taken for granted that the child has a keen sense of how to assess the pleasure

promise or the pain potential of a given experience. These are things that can be taught, even though one would learn them to a degree just through the circumstances of living. The school's purpose is to help a child avoid the waste of trial and error by passing on the collected wisdom the race has stored in its collective consciousness, be it named culture, religion, science, philosophy, art, history, tradition, civilization, conscience, or manners.

For example, the commandments offered by religion provide quite reliable rules of thumb which have been proven out over a score of centuries. As a general rule, telling the truth opens more possibilities for pleasure than lying—honesty *is* the best policy. Yet such guides are not absolute or infallible. The "white lie" as a mode of pain avoidance or pleasure bestowing does not refute the general rule, but qualifies it under certain conditions. Killing, too, usually brings with it such a deluge of pain that the pleasure of vengeance and vented rage amounts to little when measured against guilt, remorse, or the punishment law dispenses. Yet, "kill or be killed" leaves little choice, since all future pleasure depends upon staying alive. The custom of monogamy promises the pleasures of stable family living now being challenged by the serial polygamy of repeated divorce and remarriage, yet it serves as a working rule of thumb. The polite manner of standing to give a lady one's seat might be weighed against how tired one might be after a hard day at the office, yet deference to alleged female fragility offers the satisfaction of preserving the illusion of male superiority.

Through all his studies in history, literature, and science the child begins to sense the competitive costs of quite diverse activities and to weigh them against their potential for satisfaction. He sees before him the routines others have followed and what following has brought them. Unfortunately, he usually has to figure this out for himself because the curriculum buries him under a blizzard of disconnected information and measures his performance on the basis of his ability to remember it. Yet, even then larger lessons are there to be learned. Sometimes he is expected to accept the rules of thumb offered as moral guides, on the premise that they represent routines he would be a fool to question; yet he cannot help but question some of them.

In the crucible called the school he is presented with a kind of world's fair of diverse samples of pleasure and pain, successful and unsuccessful routines, shrewd and stupid examples of bargaining. Given this exposure, he cannot help but have a better understanding of how to face life when he ventures out into the marketplace as an adult shopper.

The school in effect advises him to follow established routine and to seek the pleasures more or less readily at hand, since he is more likely to estimate their cost accurately. But in pursuing "social adjustment," which represents the utilization of established routines for maximizing pleasure over pain, the school is not advocating conformity or inhibiting creativity.

Since conformity is following a losing routine, the school advocates this only when it is in error, and no school is perfect. Since creativity is the invention of new routines that increase the balance of pleasure over pain, the school will encourage this wherever possible. But since a public school must serve the majority first and foremost, and since the majority have always sought the most pleasure and the least pain in the pursuit of short-term satisfactions by following the best established routines, its obligation is clear: to be practical, useful, utilitarian the school must teach the child how best to satisfy himself in ways that least infringe upon or conflict with the satisfactions of others. Individual selfishness, which pursues short-range satisfaction blinded to its consequences in the lives of others, quickly sets up a reaction that curtails pleasure and inflicts pain. The child's opportunity to gain pleasure and his chances of minimizing pain are intimately bound to the pleasure-pain experiences of others. Thus, by presenting a world's fair of pleasure and pain, better and worse routines, shrewd and stupid examples of bargaining, the school enables all children to view an aerial picture of civilization's marketplace unavailable to those on the pavement. Only from such a perspective does a generation have the possibility of maximizing its own opportunities for pleasure over pain.

Basically, man is more a consumer than he is a shaper of events or destinies. And a school that makes him an efficient shopper has the best chance of producing a contented consumer.

THE ANALOGY OF MAN AS A SHAPER

Man as beast is so adversely shaped by instincts, impulses, and desires beyond his personal control that society, usually drawing authority from religion, must impose upon these urges rules of conduct, unmistakably clear and simple commandments, which direct behavior. If will and reason are to prevail over bodily urges and appetites, then man-made or God-ordained order must be extended in the names of faith, duty, and common sense. What the animal in man will see as an extension of order beyond necessity would be so viewed by any caged beast who wanted to roam at will. Thus appeals for animal license, issued under the euphemism "creativity," can no more be acknowledged than the roar of the lion in the zoo can be taken as proof that he should be allowed to roam free. The lion in the zoo must accept his fate, as must the animal in man.

Man as noble savage is favorably shaped when nature acts upon and through him, and directly and pitifully crippled when the artificial environment of society molds him into what he never should have become. Social and moral order, being unnatural and artificial, are by definition extensions of order beyond necessity. Society is conformity. Man-made morality is conformity. As both are contrary to nature they are not order but its negation—chaos. It is man's fate in society to mistake chaos for

order and the true order of nature for chaos. This means that the socially conditioned man cannot be creative except by accident, because instead of exploring new order in a natural setting his whole mistaken perspective equips him to add to the existing confusion. Social man hastens his own extinction by compounding chaos and calling the result improved social order.

Man as shopper is shaped by the pleasure attained and attainable and, at the same time, is molded by the pain he endures and what he does to avoid more. He is shaped by the necessities of the rules of bargaining, without which the whole marketplace would deteriorate into a jungle productive only of pain and frustration and perhaps violence in the extreme. Since conformity is mistaken routine that can and should be avoided, the free enterprise of pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain within the rules of bargaining must operate like the law of supply and demand if the social system is to reach an optimum balance of pleasure over pain. Creativity, the offering of new, more effective routine, is the best antidote to conformity, since anything that increases the ratio of pleasure over pain is surely destined to win out in the long run.

Each of the preceding views of human nature has man being shaped either by his animal desires, the exigencies of nature, or his susceptibility to pain and his sensitivity to pleasure. *Whether driven from within, pushed from without, or bounced back and forth between pleasure and pain, human nature remains a fixed, stable, and determined property most at home in a herd, a jungle, or a marketplace.*

Organisms, however, at least the more complex ones, take a hand in shaping themselves. Instead of being entirely determined by circumstance, they influence circumstances sufficiently to allow for possibilities that could not emerge without conscious effort. Thus the view of man as shaper focuses attention on aspects of human behavior that extend beyond animal impulses and desires, the natural order of things that influences action, or the pleasure/pain principle that functions in connection with choice. Not denying the appropriateness of analogies that liken society to a herd, jungle, or marketplace, and man to a beast, a noble savage, or a shopper, the view of man as a shaper offers only that these analogies fail to account for what is most *human* in society and in man—the potential for growth.

Man grows physically as a part of nature. He evolves biologically as a part of nature (to the point where he begins to tamper with the genetic makeup of future generations, either by accident through nuclear radiation or by design by, for example, breeding of cattle). Human societies begin quite naturally, as do those of ants, bees, and apes, but insect societies (and to some extent primitive tribal groups) reflect physical and biological conditions that narrowly prescribe the necessary forms of organization. But as human social groups gradually invent and develop a language, and acquire a surplus of time and energy, reflection produces

a new perspective. Men can look at what they do, wonder why they do it, and explore new possibilities. Between the immediate demands for attention and activity that the environment issues, and man's vague dreams about what might be but is not, lies a no man's land of dawning possibilities. The light of reflection gradually illumines the shadows, and begins to give shape and substance to the quality in human nature that distinguishes man from the other animals—self-awareness.

The whole notion of conscious choice carries as hidden freight a concept of a self for whom conditions will be one way or another, and, as a consequence, that self will be something it could not have been under other circumstances. *In considered choice man holds the power for growth that will make a possible self emerge.* It has been to the credit of philosophy, poetry, novels, drama, dance, music, sculpture, essays, criticism, history, and science that they have again and again given expression and portrayal to a variety of possible selves and possible conditions for their realization. To extend a portrait of a previously unimagined self, and show how it might be within reach, is to present a new form of order on a grand scale. Creativity in art, philosophy, literature, and religion have often been directed at the presentation of just such order without defense. It is such creativity that makes it possible to explore the potential of a concept of self without having to spend a whole life to become such a person. Here is imagined order that suggests a new awareness of the possibilities of self. It is seldom complete, difficult to justify, and fraught with errors of omission. In it are lessons of the most far-reaching implication for those with the sensitivity to grasp them.

In social systems advanced beyond beehives or ant colonies the concept of *necessary* order has only limited meaning. Order readily accepted and little challenged is a result of social conditioning and the failure to exercise enough imagination to see new possibilities. Apart from assuring certain minimum conditions for human survival in complex situations, most of what is put forth as necessary order stands only as a convenience of the moment. It is this convenience accepted in the name of necessity that makes it so difficult for people to break the bounds of conformity and explore areas open to creative interpretation. Such convenience curtails growth. The love of comfort, being the enemy of effort, is the enemy of creativity.

ORDER OF CONVENIENCE

Man as shaper is at war with convenience, not with necessary order. It is easier to read a comic book than a novel. It is more convenient to do things as they have always been done than to innovate. Acceptance of established order, even where it is obviously not necessary, is a rut named "the path of least resistance." Conformity, an order of convenience, can result from the extension of an order necessary for survival. Such conformity is the best guarantee of security. From survival to security to

conformity to the impossibility of change, the line extends much as Orwell drew it in *1984*. If the fear is great enough, as it is in times of war, order is extended to cover many areas of human activity. The extent to which man fears, and seeks to avoid, crisis is an excellent gauge of how far he will seek to extend order, because it exposes the limits of what will seem necessary to him. From there it will often seem convenient to go even further. Unfortunately, for individuals within a society it is difficult to perceive such social developments as they happen, much less anticipate them. How much of what finally happened in Hitler's Germany could a Jew foresee in 1933? If he did predict accurately, what could he have done, besides leave? And if he tried to confide his fears to an average German, not yet a Nazi, wouldn't his friend have said, "Are you mad? This is Germany, 1933. We are civilized human beings, not some kind of monsters. It can't happen here"? But it *did* happen. It was convenient to let it happen. And once that order of conformity was established, it was all but impossible to stop from inside the system.

The order of convenience, precisely because it is the path of least resistance which promises most protection against whatever is feared, is the most serious threat to creativity. As soon as man accepts the premise that the business of society is to protect men against all they fear, he loses the battle against conformity. Men must learn to live with their fears, real and imagined, and a school that helps children understand their fears takes a first step toward making creativity possible.

Nor is progress possible when institutions put most of their efforts into comforting men in the face of their fears. Men *will* die. Men *will* have accidents. Men *will* suffer reversals. The mortician cannot change this, no matter how (see Waugh's *The Loved Ones* or Mitford's *The American Way of Death*) the undertakers try to make death an imitation of life. More dangerous than the mortician is the insurance man. Equipped with statistics of the inevitable, he will show us how to spend our lives in fear of it. He has installment plans to make it convenient to devote our income to paying him so he will show up at the moment of grief to bring us a check. If we let him he will convince us that dollars are the only possible consolation for our loss. We cannot avoid grief. Someone has to die first. What he can do is make it convenient to have us order our lives so he and his company can get rich. The insurance man needs our grief. What else would he use against us to make us buy his policy? Where would morticians and insurance men be in a society that did not dread death and grief more than it prized living? Most men willingly sacrifice a good measure of their time for living in order to appease their fear of death and grief. How else could insurance companies control one-tenth of the nation's wealth, and morticians live like princes while teachers live like paupers? There is justice in the order of convenience governed by fear, but it is ironic justice.

Fear, of course, is the ideal instrument for cultivating the extension of order under the banner of necessity. Gross fears are identifiable in a way that lesser ones are not, however. To some extent we can teach the child how much the society stands to lose, and how little it stands to gain, by impeaching members of the Supreme Court, forbidding the teaching of evolution in Tennessee, excluding China from the United Nations, or rescinding the First and Fifth Amendments. He can be taught, to some extent, how to handle his fears and thus be less easily victimized by those who would have him become a bond slave indentured to crisis. This must be done for creativity to survive.

Yet that is not enough to liberate man and make him shaper of his self-awareness. It only helps to keep his image of himself from being totally shaped by the mortician who sees him as a walking corpse, the insurance salesman who sees him as a bundle of accidents, and the Madison Avenue advertising experts who define human nature as a collection of armpits, denture odors, headaches, stomach-aches, arthritic pains, men and women grown lazy, bald, fat, and sexless. Advertising is the perfect rebuttal to Robert Burns's plea that we see ourselves as others see us. The only antidote to the intellectual and artistic poison that streams from commercial sources is in the poetry, fiction, drama, philosophy, and music that looks at man as a key figure in an artistic composition. We may not like what Miller, Salinger, Updike, Hemingway, or Faulkner tell us about man, but at least they have sought to look at him as he is and as he might be. No man sees *all* of anything, so each views from his own perspective; but at least *their* perspective is not narrowed to the pinhole of viewing man as a walking billboard for the advertising of deodorants.

In this age when men make vigorous use of leisure time to compensate for the low-energy demands of automated work, it has not yet been made clear that the whole of industrial society has grown up on the implicit premise that man should avoid effort. Teachers watch each generation of chauffered students get heavier and lazier. Parents watch their children assemble plastic airplanes stamped to a mold, where they once followed plans or drew their own and cut the ribs and gussets out of balsa wood. Men watch ball games on television where once they went to the ball park and rooted for the home team. Children no longer have to spend part of the day gathering enough players to field two teams, because the little league has the whole season scheduled in advance and reduced to routine. Convenience is for the conservation of effort, as if a man, like a flashlight battery, had just so much energy, and the less he uses in any one activity the longer he shines before the light goes out. The unacknowledged fear of effort makes man an easy victim for any extension of order that promises convenience—from the power mowers used on postage-stamp lawns to the

electric toothbrush. He who accepts convenience because he resents effort can never be creative.

Fortunately, *children have to be taught to resent effort.* Unfortunately, we teach them to resent it quite early in their lives. Yet, when we watch a child at play before the little league has imprisoned him within an adult structure, the energy he expends is amazing. Some children go in to watch television when a game starts, because they don't want to give the effort they know it will demand: they have learned from adults. But the child at play learns much about himself and what he can do: whether or not he is a bad loser, how well he can throw, hit, or catch a ball. The child who went in to watch a ball game on television will, if he is clever, soon begin to recite the batting averages and home-run production of leading players, so his friends will begin to play less and watch more themselves. But one cannot be creative in the recitation of averages and scores the way one can when looking for new ways to steal a base. The child who resents effort will be looking for ways to shift the grounds of activity in the direction of what he finds convenient, and such a child is already well on his way to success as a salesman selling comfort and convenience to others.

Schools are not usually places of effort. Of drudgery, yes, but not of effort. Not all genuine effort must be cast in the mold of play, but the differences between sand lot and little league baseball offer an excellent illustration of the gap between contrived and spontaneous effort. A sand lot game must be spontaneous; it continues only so long as interest remains. A little league game cannot be spontaneous—spontaneity is not organizable—and it must continue under the rules even when interest is absent. Consequently, all kinds of artificial devices—dinners, trophies, rivalry, newspaper ballyhoo, and the like—must be introduced to keep the thing going. Many a parent has had to force his son to "meet his obligations to the team" on a day when the child preferred not to "play." This could not take place in sand lot ball, except as a child is coerced by his peers. It is not fair to say that kids do not like to play little league ball; they often love it, but often for the wrong reasons. It is not play, it is children's work.

Naïve and vulnerable, children quickly pick up the adult motivation for success and recognition that goes with championship games. They have adult umpires, adult coaches, adult scorekeepers. They only play the game, they do not shape it. The rules are clear-cut and imposed, and the youngsters must accept adult judgments on all matters of dispute. They learn to play this brand of baseball as a display of skill, as a business little different from working in a factory or an office. In the sand lot games children make their own rules. A strike was not a strike until the four-eyed little runt behind the catcher was told where he could go if he called the next one that way. Surprise of surprises, sometimes he was sufficiently frightened so that what even the batter could see was a strike was called a ball. This teaches something not to be learned in a little league game. Start a fight with the umpire in a little league game and all one learns is that the game

is a fixed thing to be accepted as is, for adult judgments are not to be questioned. Everyone who makes the effort shapes the sand lot game right down to local rules: over the fence is out instead of a home run; three fouls are a strike; no bunts down the first base line are allowed because the first baseman was spiked last week; and anyone who hits with the label forward buys a new bat if he splits one.

Everyone who has played this kind of baseball has shaped, and has been shaped by, each dispute, with no adults to arbitrate fair or foul, sarcasm or profanity, knuckles or belts. Make no mistake, however, it is not little league baseball that is at odds with what is to be expected of the child later by society: for a management trainee one couldn't design a better preparatory program. It is the sand lot games, so extensively self-regulated, that have no appropriate adult counterpart. Because society has little room for men who would shape themselves, their futures, or the conditions that impinge upon them, there is less and less room left for a childhood that might nourish such an outlook.

It is much to ask of a school that it resist catering to the fears that govern adults. It is even more to ask that they switch from the little league model of the classroom to a sand lot approach that depends upon spontaneity and interest. Hardest of all is to stand in the way of convenience. The drudgery notion of effort, which assigns great books to ensure students an exposure to broader conceptions of man and society than comic books and television can provide, will not do it. Probably the only place left within the tightly prescribed curriculums of so many schools where students can approach their studies somewhat in the spirit of uncompromised play is an art class. Because few people care much about how a student paints, as contrasted with how he spells, the pressure to formalize his training remains minimal. In a good art class a student shapes his own work with no lack of attention to skill, detail, or careful planning. He seldom has as broad a latitude in shaping his own reading program or his own sentences. He has book lists and grammar to ensure that he is the shaped, not the shaper.

Man as shaper is not a grown-up child at play, except as "play" at its best is a passionately earnest expenditure of effort that rises from within the player and the game. To parents, little league games seem to be play because the child can be made to show earnestness in winning and will expend great effort to that end. They do not see that the very nature of league organization can make it work, not play, because the motivation comes from outside the player. Play is engaged in for its own sake, while most of what we call work is done for external reward. A child resists being called away from play, but most adults can't wait to get away from work. Aside from trivial recreation there seems to be too little in many individuals' lives that they *want* to do: they have nothing to shape, hence they have little to do but accept convenience wherever they can find it.

Those who emerge as creative adults in letters, arts, science, and philoso-

phy provide the best illustration of men who have been able to keep alive the enthusiasm originally experienced in connection with games and play. As indispensable as formal mastery is to accomplished performance in any such field of endeavor, there seems some reason to believe that emphasis on the mastery of rules of grammar, laws of spelling, facts of history, laws of science, techniques of mathematics, and vocabulary of foreign languages takes the excitement out of learning.

The *old* (as distinguished from the new pedagogy based on "discovery") discovery notion of doing science was certainly naïve, since it would require that each student be a Newton to rediscover the law of gravity, or else that he be tricked into believing he had discovered something in the way Socrates fooled his students into thinking they had known the point all along. Yet, both the Socratic dialogue and the Baconian notion of discovery do make of a discussion or an experiment something more than a sterile exercise: dialogue focuses attention on verbal cues, and attempts at discovery raise observable clues to positions of prominence in inquiry. Cues and clues are the vital requirements of instruction or investigation that goes beyond memorization and repetition. The child lives among a succession of cues and clues that the school seldom considers. Instead, it would have him look at ancient history or classical literature in the expectation that somehow, some day, their relevance to his immediate circumstances will become clear. For a few students this seems to happen.

For a majority it doesn't. Yet until he can see, interpret, and understand the significance of the cues and clues he encounters daily, he is in a poor position to shape anything. The school may be unable to allay the fears that adults impart to a child, but it *can* teach him to give less fearful interpretation to the cues and clues that frightened his parents. When study focuses upon such cues as the language used by advertising to make the trivial seem important, or such clues as symbols of status worn by children to show their economic superiority, then inquiry can become a spirited activity in which the reading of Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* provides a marvelously illuminating mirror in which to see society anew.

The American public school has been a successful instrument for bringing together a host of diverse groups and molding them into a reasonably stable nation. After accomplishing that, it became a major factor in overcoming the rigidity of class distinctions, making it possible for the sons of farmers and factory workers to become doctors and lawyers. But these social gains were often achieved at tremendous intellectual cost. First, the generalizations appropriate to the highest level of scholarship had to be simplified to the point where the distinctions that gave them intellectual significance were almost entirely lost. These oversimplified generalizations, fitted into the context of a commonsense manner of speaking, have lost the tentativeness with which they began.

Second, at each stage of mastery the child is given a sense of finality

and completeness about American democracy or about gravity as a law of nature that is frequently tantamount to teaching him myth. This has meant that leadership in society often rests with men who work with the lowest common denominator of meaning, and in consequence American politics deals in such oversimplified generalizations that it might better be described as functioning on myth than on any kind of knowledge at all. This means that before a student can learn to interpret a generalization more subtly, much effort and energy must go into tearing down the old myth, and in the schools more time may be spent on unlearning damaging myths than on learning the distinctions that make it less likely that myths will be believed.

Third, as an instrument of social adjustment the school has made language an extension of manners. Social studies in the schools, for example, are more suited to training salesmen than scholars. Since more will be salesmen than scholars, this seems quite functional. But language as manners proceeds at the expense of subtlety of meaning, as anyone who has been to a cocktail party can easily verify. In a society where one is not supposed to say anything critical because it would offend a potential customer, it gradually becomes more difficult to find any words to carry that meaning at all. The process of social adjustment is carried on not only by purging descriptive four-letter words and substituting polysyllabic euphemisms. A garbage man seems more elegant if he is called a "sanitation engineer." War is a "police action." Finally, one's manners are so refined he never has an argument, or, if one takes place, he does his best not to notice it.

This process may be excellently suited to social adjustment and economic advance, but it plays absolute hell with meaning. The child who learns to use words as manners more than he uses them for meaning soon finds he can talk endlessly and say almost nothing. This is the ultimate conformity, wrought by turning language into an instrument of immediate social convenience—manners.

The steps are clear: distinctions become lost and ambiguity expands; generalizations are oversimplified until they turn into myths; and meaning is sacrificed for manners until "communication" becomes any sound that brings agreement. Ambiguity, myths, and agreement form a tight circle from which meaning is excluded—the ultimate comedy of manners; the Absurd. Devoid of meaning, socially positive *because* intellectually negative, *all* is farce. Ambiguity, myth, and effective agreement are not names for states of knowledge in this context; rather, they are names assigned to the anatomy of meaninglessness. When life is seen as truly absurd there can be no talk of creativity.

To preserve the distinctions that make words precise, the teacher must have sufficient knowledge of subject matter to recognize, present, reenforce, and reconstruct a language in which shades of meaning play a prominent, nay dominant, role. To keep from overgeneralizing to the point

of perpetrating myths, the teacher must know the methodology of his subject and the limitations of its findings. Beyond that he must be content to teach without offering himself or the child the false satisfaction of pretended completeness. To keep from subordinating meaning to manners, the teacher must have a feeling for logic, proof, and evidence as well as the courage to say, and have students say, the unpopular. Adequate distinctions, grounded generalizations, and an emphasis on meaning will then have to be fitted within a program that focuses attention on available cues and clues before students will begin to rise above a life of material and social convenience. With such tools may come a willingness to expend energy at the game of attempting to present new order—at the game of creativity.

To be creative is to play the game of living for all it is worth—not for money, success, fame, or immortality, but for meaning. Meaning is to the social organism what food is to the physical organism. This is not a little league game, where society sets the rules; it is a sand lot game, where each man shapes himself and those around him. When he shapes with a view toward meaning, not toward manners, he leaves the business clubs and the chambers of commerce behind. When he looks toward meaning he struggles to enter into a dialogue with genius. The schools exist to teach him the language and the concepts that will make such a dialogue possible. Once begun, such a dialogue has much in common with play. But it is not play, and certainly not child's play, as Haller's commentary in *Steppenwolf* so excellently portrays. Man as shaper finds his identity in the passionate pursuit of meaning. To find new meaning is to find new order, and to find new order is to find new meaning. This is the dialogue between the visual and verbal arts. Each shapes the other and both shape new art forms. Only as shaper is man creative. As the child at play knows exhaustion but not the resentment of efforts, the creative man knows agony but not fear.

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