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TEACHING AND HEALING

THE dramatic declaration of Archimedes, "Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth," might be taken as an example of the abstract simplicity which lies at the root of all the sciences. It also illustrates the principle on which reliable knowledge as well as work depends. Not only a man's house, but also his ruling convictions, need to rest upon a rock. Neither homes nor social systems can survive on unstable foundations, so that having a place to stand is a metaphysical as well as a physical necessity.

Where do people get their metaphysical certainties—what they stand on in making up their minds about everything else? For the most part, they get them—or seem to get them—by a process of assimilation of the common assumptions of the society in which they live. The accumulation of basic beliefs begins in childhood and continues throughout life. The Middle Ages were a time in history when it was commonly assumed that all human beings were completely dependent upon recognized authorities—representatives of the Church—for the foundations of meaning in their lives. Adam of Saint-Victor, a poet, put the gist of the universal belief in a few lines:

> Thus professing, thus believing,
> Never insolently leaving
> The highway of our faith,
> Duty weighing, law obeying,
> Never shall we wander straying
> Where heresy is death.

Adam wrote in the twelfth century. Six hundred years later, the French iconoclast and advocate of materialism, Lamettrie, was urging that only ignorance of "natural forces" had made men take refuge in God, and that the world would never be happy unless it was "atheistic." His notorious book, *Man a Machine,* expressed the Enlightenment confidence in science as the new foundation for knowledge, and in one place he makes his spokesman give insistent reasons for a great change in the foundations of belief:

> "If Atheism were universally disseminated, all the branches of religion would be torn up by the roots. Then there would be no more theological wars: there would no longer be soldiers of religion, that terrible kind of soldier. Nature, which had been infected by the consecrated poison, would win back her rights and her purity. Deaf to all other voices, men would follow their own individual impulses, and these impulses alone can lead them to happiness along the pleasant path of virtue."

We know the impressive events which led to the discard of religious faith for reliance on progressive discovery of the laws of nature. Copernicus' revival of Greek astronomy, the observations of Tycho Brahe, the work of Kepler and Galileo, and, finally, Newton's Laws of Motion, seemed quite sufficient, in principle, to provide a new place whereon to stand. Lamettrie's statement, however, is essential for understanding the moral dynamics of the great change. The cruelties and injustices in which organized religion had participated were behind the surging revolt against the theology-sanctioned rule of emperors, kings, and feudal princes. While many men retained an intuitive sort of non-theological religion—as for example the Deists, who predominated among the leaders of the American revolution—*knowledge* was increasingly looked for in the discoveries of science. The most noticeable thing about the serious literature of the eighteenth century is the feeling of vast new beginnings in human affairs, with endless promise of direct access to the truth about nature and life through experimental science.

What these men wanted, and what they got, was facts unprejudiced by religious bias or assumption, and not susceptible to priestly manipulation. Truths found in nature, it seemed

to them, had a wonderful metaphysical neutrality—in fact, they weren't metaphysical at all, but simply *physical*—and there was a humanistic glow in the prospect of discovering more and more of them because of the intellectual freedom that would prevail in all scientific investigations. Thus natural facts acquired a particular sanctity as symbols of emancipation of mind. This spirit is often evidenced in the writings of distinguished scientists of the nineteenth century, and sometimes, although much more rarely, in works by twentieth-century investigators.

There is a sense in which the optimism and anticipation of limitless resources for discovery felt by the early scientists parallels the temper of the early leaders of the American Republic, who looked out on a vast land which could not possibly be "used up" in the foreseeable future. Its abundance was there for the taking by hardy souls.

The old "total" explanations of religion through the wondrous powers of the deity—not a sparrow falls, etc.—which might unify the feelings, but did not, after all, really explain anything, could now be forgotten. If a man felt the need of religion, he could have it—Luther's Protestant Reformation had made that plain. He could choose his own, or make one up: are we not free? But the effective place to stand in order *to know* was in the midst of the vast expanse of opportunity provided by science. No one really needed total explanations any more, since there was so much to do.

Beckoning to every awakened mind was this vast continent of natural reality to be explored by science. It was simply there, as a wonderful store of raw material, waiting to be mastered and used. Energetic activity has a way of displacing the need for larger comprehension or explanation. The meaning of all these things lay in what you could *do* with them. And theological interpretations, it was felt, must never be allowed to creep back into man's conception of nature, since that would renew the old bondage of men's minds. "Matter" and its phenomena, and the laws governing its motions, were better regarded simply as brute facts to be isolated, one by one, and then defined, controlled, managed, and turned into proper utilities which would eventually serve the common welfare. The joys of technique, the fascinations of method, the thrill of access to power were ample to satisfy the "higher" longings of human beings. Who could measure the practical good that would be accomplished? So the fires of philosophy burnt low.

In the twentieth century, however, there were unexpected developments. Men began to realize that the partisan emotions of religious belief could easily be translated into fierce social allegiances which claimed "scientific" certainty. The authority of revolutionary theory could create policing institutions as dreadful as the Holy Inquisition. Political fanatics proved as apt in learning the methods of heresy-hunting and persecution as any medieval churchman. Further, science itself, which once promised to free men from the mummery of belief, was now becoming the private preserve of specialists who were quite unable to communicate widely what they knew. It was too obscure, too involved in difficult abstractions. And what they knew became, on occasion, a threat to all the world. It seemed that, through advancing methods and techniques, they had found a place to stand where they might not only "move" the earth but shatter it to bits.

There were other equally ominous if less obvious developments. The branches of science devoted to the study of human behavior faithfully followed the example of the physical sciences. They learned the skills of decomposition and studied the "parts" of human beings. Since prediction and control are natural objectives of physics and chemistry, these were adopted as the goals of the science of man. Men who became practiced in the manipulation of human longings created a *shaman* profession whose services are much in demand by commercial enterprise and,

more lately, by political candidates. The management of opinion is more of an industry than a profession, these days, its expertise becoming apparent in the unsavory linkages which have grown up between established political power and institutions of education. Meanwhile, as a spectre which grows more tangible every day, the horror of war gnaws at the confidence of human beings in both what is held to be "knowledge" and the men with the power to use that knowledge for purposes increasingly difficult to understand.

In retrospect, one might say that men like Lamettrie, who attacked the prevailing faith of their times, were declaring that the people were victims of their own belief in a knowledge that was not knowledge at all. It had no stable foundation, but gained its authority from the claims of a powerful institution. Expose the fraudulence of the claims, he said, and the authority would collapse. And so it did, for the most part, although its decline occupied centuries and may only now be finally disappearing because of the last stages of institutional disintegration.

Yet there has always been evidence of the reality of another kind of religion—better spoken of, perhaps, as a transcendental stance, or a place of high and ennobling vision—which by its own nature resists all attempts to structure its counsels into the form of institutions which consolidate and authorize belief. Its certainties lie behind a protective screen of metaphor and paradox. It might be characterized as affording a kind of knowledge which has no traffic with power. One must approach it with only the soul's enormous claim. To all others it speaks through veils of ambiguity. This knowledge gains little popularity with the architects of systems of common belief or the seekers for workable rules of control. It is nice enough in parts, they say, but has no utility to practical men like ourselves. Yet it filters into the world by some secret access and its counsels have a haunting presence in the lives of many men who perform a double role—they do the work that is expected of them, yet their hearts are uneasy and their minds filled with secret questionings. And it is difficult to deny that sages, mystics, neglected prophets, and philosophers indifferent to the laws of human management seem to have found a place of their own on which to stand, yet not, apparently, any place outside themselves—no site that can be externalized to serve as fulcrum in some great spiritual machine. What is the place of independent strength and certainty found by such men? The language of their reports is a strange compound of certainty and uncertainty, of sudden clarity and enclosing ambiguity.

The place, no doubt, is the *terra incognita* of a matured subjectivity. Sometimes it is warned that men who seek this place must be prepared for terrors beyond imagining. There is talk of recovering childhood's innocence, yet of iron determination and burning one's bridges. Mystics speak of the "dark night of the soul," produced by the melting into naught of all images once sought as sources of comforting external security. Even the hero-prince of Indian epic, Arjuna, was reduced to quivering pleas for a restored "normality" by only momentary sight of the ultimate foundations of being that his teacher, Krishna, revealed to him.

It seems not impossible that something paralleling the psychological isolation of this inner search might come to men in historical terms, with the progressive dissolutions, one after the other, of realities which obtained their substance from either the great façades of nature or the collective beliefs of men. What, for example, today, is "matter," the promise of whose motions and laws supplied men with their growing sense of certainty for the past two or three hundred years? It is, we are now told, a mesh of incomprehensible equations. Its behavior, which once had the simplicity of Archimedes' proposition, or of Newton's easily comprehensible World Machine, has become a mathematical mystery. The place where we were *all* going to stand, where we would know for ourselves, floated into our

intellectual atmosphere for a while, accomplished a few revolutions, and then, like a wandering asteroid, departed behind a non-Euclidean mist, trailing clouds of frustration.

The descriptive sciences of man have given us no better service. Their demeaning definitions have betrayed the hope of the Enlightenment and turned the free spirits of our time into rebels against practically all science. Most social science seems to produce treatises which, speaking practically, are little more than manuals for manipulators. The method allows for no other approach. Only in areas where brute irrationals *must* be recognized—in power-politics, profit-seeking commerce, and, perhaps, in art—does social science submit to uneasy relationships with actual human behavior as a kind of unavoidable pollution. And, generally speaking, academic social science has yet to impress favorably men with wide practical experience in these fields.

One phase of inquiry into the problems of public health also deserves attention. In recent years several defenders of the rights of the mentally ill have expressed outrage at the fact that mental health is at least partly defined as conformity. The insanity of large numbers, they say, becomes the sanity of society. The work of a much neglected physician and psychoanalyst, Trigant Burrow, is richly informing on this subject, through incisive development of the view that conventional life obtains many of its customs and ruling standards from forms of collective alienation and grossly distorted conceptions of the self and of other people. Several other psychologists have written searchingly along these lines.

The reader who comes to agree with this psycho-social critique may find himself in the curious position of hoping that it does not become *widely* accepted. For, quite plainly, the idea that the society itself is honeycombed with abnormality and marred by patterns of mental aberration has in it all the potentialities of a terrorizing doctrine. A man must gain independent sources of conviction concerning social health and psychological balance before he can even entertain so threatening a view of conventional authority.

We do indeed live in a time when several very ugly rumors of basic instability are gathering strength. Not only is God reported to be "dead," but His representatives on earth confess to great confusion in all their houses, and the new religions seem suited for none but the rootless young. Meanwhile, those hard and serviceable "atoms" of which everything, as we heard a century ago, is made, have dissolved into a vague electronic mist, their energies at the disposal of a brigade of boy Fausts who worry about their souls, but still deliver the bombs that are ordered; while the great political powers turn for counsel and direction to men who measure the future of freedom and the common good by counting the millions of people they think they can kill during the first twenty minutes or so of the next war.

Where should a man looking for sanity, for a place on which to stand, turn, in circumstances like these? It may be that when all the votes are in—although this question is hardly a "democratic" issue—the best testimony will be that the only firm ground for human existence is in the stuff of human fellowship and the enduring needs and longings of other men. The question inquires into the nature and reality of knowledge. Our experience has been that control of forces which originate outside of human beings—knowledge which *disregards* man—directs the world and everyone in it on a destructive course. Moreover, we cannot use this knowledge to serve or amplify our human qualities. It is only knowledge for manipulation and control. Carried to its logical extreme, manipulation and control would reduce whole populations to zombies. Since knowledge, by any rational definition, must be judged by its fruits, it is apparent that capacity for manipulation and control is not knowledge, but only technique. Unguided technique channels blind force.

What men need, as we are forever saying, is knowledge that makes them free, and this can only be knowledge which has its being at a level unknown to and unaffected by coercive or manipulative power. A man who lives by his awareness of the universal need of this sort of knowledge has found an impregnable place to stand. That, at least, is the theory here under consideration. It is an attempt at a definition of "sanity" which will not collapse from critical studies of the effects of "conditioning" by widespread belief, or any other means of exposing the fallibility of "hearsay" forms of psychological security.

This is not, perhaps, very much to say about the meaning of sanity. But it might be thought to have at least the virtue of candor, since the best healers of the ills of men's minds have had little, themselves, to say about the nature of sanity. It cannot, they do say, survive the intention of harming or blaming other people. It grows out of some inner strength, a strength which becomes greatest when it is turned to the enrichment of the lives of others.

This is the sanity of sages, of the powerless wise, of those whose secret stance seems such a mystery.

Well, if this were true, there could be little expectation that it would be recognized all at once. Finding an inner place to stand is an unscheduled undertaking. It is an enterprise unmindful of geography and indifferent to the egotisms of time and clime. The explorers who set out upon this unfamiliar pilgrimage have little to guide them save some traces of the leaven left by past generations of the wise. There is hardly a serviceable idiom in the world of the present for speaking of such things, only an unfamiliar and perhaps awkward language brought forward from distant epochs. And some natural reticence seems inevitably to overtake those who have their glimpses of reality from some hidden place. They do not speak easily of their motives.

But it is also natural that persons endowed with even a little of this irreducible sanity should be found working at some kind of education, engaged in some practical means of getting at the ills that are now so common everywhere. The language of these people is their own; somehow, they always create it. The life of their knowledge is reflected in the metaphors of their activity, not raised beyond reach in inaccessible abstractions, although now and then lucid and carrying generalizations come as by-products of their work.

These people always *choose* their work. They have not been managed into it by planners. It is always something "new." It has, that is, a living freshness. The "system" is a bother, being the spatial scheme of an old growth-process that needs to give way. But these people have no enemies. They may make an enemy now and then, but they name no enemies.

Teaching and healing, healing and teaching—is there any longer a difference between the two callings? Is there anything else worth doing, now, considering the condition of the world? Is there anything else that *can* be done?

REVIEW
THE PUEBLO PEOPLE

EXCEPT for the writings of John Collier, whose prose was sometimes borne along by flooding intuitive perception, the novel is probably the best means of getting at the reality of the American Indians. Strong persuasion for this view, in any event, comes from reading *The Man Who Killed the Deer,* by Frank Waters, first published in 1942, and available in paperback from Sage Books ($2.50; Swallow Press, 1139 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60605). It is the fashion, now, to celebrate the natural harmonies of Indian life in contrast to the acquisitive drive and technological exploits of white marauders, but Mr. Waters, while not indifferent to this comparison, writes with more important matters in mind. He is concerned with the *inner* adaptive power of the Pueblo Indians—of some of them—to survive the mutilations of the traditional forms of their culture. The wonder of the story lies in the author's ability to make the reader feel the resources of the Indians for doing this. Its tensions and drama are entirely in terms of Indian attitudes and sensibilities, and we recall no work with anything like the same success in enabling the reader to identify with the principal characters.

Briefly, *The Man Who Killed the Deer* relates the internal struggles of Martiniano, an Indian of exceptional individuality and stubborn strength. As a boy he suffered detribalization by being sent away to school. Returning years later, he is unable to enter wholeheartedly into the ways of the Pueblo. The pattern of his resistance to Indian social pressure unfolds against the background of tribal resistance to the thoughtless attacks of white law and custom on the ancient traditions of the pueblo. The story takes place in the twentieth century. There is no sentimentality in it, but neither does it end in unrelieved tragedy. On the contrary, along with Martiniano's reconstruction of the meaning of his life, there is restoration by the Government of mountain lands to the Indians, including places of sacred ceremonial importance. Yet Mr. Waters avoids any shallow suggestion of a "happy ending." As a white trader trusted by the Indians is made to reflect:

> Byers saw its falsity. There can be no oases in the desert of ever-shifting time, no idyllic glades of primitive culture in the forest of mankind, no ivory towers of thought. We are all caught in the tide of perpetual change. These pueblos, these reservations must sometimes pass away, and the red flow out into the engulfing white. The Government had only postponed the inevitable. His resentment gave way to a faint sadness. The victory, even for the Indians, seemed a shabby makeshift.
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> For it was predicated upon the differences between men upon the outward forms of their lives, their ethnological behavior, and not upon the one eternally groping spirit of mankind. It was maintained by the white who was content to set the red apart in his tiny zoo, and by the red who with traditional secrecy and stubborn obduracy to change, himself held aloof. So both must sometime pass: the Indian with his simple fundamental spiritual premise untranslated into modern terms, and finally the white with his monstrous materiality.

Most readers, having little else to go on, will be inclined to place confidence in Mr. Waters' independent insights concerning the American Indians, since he earns trust with such passages. His book is essentially a work of art. He is not trying to "prove" anything, and the perspectives on which his story depends obtain their validity from the grain of communal Indian life. One thing the book does do, however—perhaps going beyond its intentions—is to make the reader wonder about the handful of white men who have this extraordinary capacity to write about the Indians with such depth of understanding. For most white readers the "otherness" of the Indians is almost impenetrable. Their inner idiom is one we seldom use, or have forgotten. We don't know how to relate their symbolic intimations to roots of common value. They are like people of a lost time, preserved among us by some mysterious alchemy, who speak to us more with their silences than with words. All men no doubt have in them timeless depths, and their own ways of referring to those depths, but the cadences of Indian feeling

reach us through metaphors for which we lack associated meanings. It takes someone who can think like a white man but feel like an Indian to bridge the abyss separating the two cultures.

One meets such men from time to time. Mostly, however, they are quiet, taciturn individuals who do not write. They just seem to "know" about the Indians. If you went by feeling instead of appearance, you might be persuaded that they *are* Indians. It is as though the two races occasionally find authentic synthesis in these rare and somewhat puzzling or even mysterious men.

Why are the races so different? Letting the "issues" of this question go for a moment, we might say that while the white man insists upon definitions, the Indian prefers nuances of feeling, and he does not lack discipline in recognizing and distinguishing between them. We know little of this schooling in subjectivity. The white man delights in conceptual elaboration and logical distinctions. A meaning is not a meaning for him unless he has labored to make it the captive of his verbal forms. Abstractions have been his means to power; techniques embodying a similar precision have enabled him to build the vast superstructures of modern civilization. So also with the complex structure of law, bringing multiple confinements and inflexibilities along with the apparent securities it has provided. It might also be said that modern Western man has turned his preoccupation with words and terms of finite limitation into a Faustian debacle. So, naturally enough, we speak of our "alienation." Literature is now almost a form of verbal melancholia, obsessively aware of the traps men make for themselves with this talent for generalization.

There is no doubt a close relation between the Westerner's strong sense of "individuality" and his capacity for abstraction and definition. To be "individual" is to be able to set oneself apart, to act independently, to recognize and calibrate *differences.* For people who pride themselves on being "free individuals," the ground of the common unities of mankind, even of the mankind living around the corner, grows remote. To be a conscious self brings a two-edged ability, making possible both far-reaching vision and intense egotism. Self-interest requires self-consciousness, and the intellectual skills born to self-consciousness can be devoted to theoretical proofs that works of self-interest and egotism are somehow endowed with the spirit of progress. They can even turn the despair arising from feelings of lost simplicities into sophisticated art-forms lending "style" to self-pity.

Well, we are well enough informed concerning the failures and breakdowns of a civilization based upon these capacities—and as much or more upon the vulnerabilities which go with the capacities. What about the humanizing possibilities of the abstracting and generalizing power of the mind?

It is just here that a writer like Frank Waters makes his distinctive and very nearly unique contribution. Some inborn Indian essence puts him in tune with the timeless unities underlying Indian ways, which the Indians could not possibly explain to us, yet which he is able to render into a language we can understand.

There is a way of speaking of these things without definition, which neither vulgarizes nor explains away. Here, for example, is what Mr. Waters says about the Indian attitude in relation to "time," the pitiless task-master of those who continually set themselves finite goals:

> Who knew what o'clock it was? There were no battered clocks, no dollar Ingersolls that kept time. The people likely couldn't read them anyway. They had no sense of time, these people. To them time was no moving flow to be measured, ticked out and struck: at funny intervals. Time was all one ever-present and indestructible. It was they who moved through it. There was only the consciousness of the moment for right action. No one knew how it came. But when it came they obeyed.

Is the price of being "an individual" some driving compulsion to rise up in separate identity from all else, and then find it necessary to invent

an "idea of the self" and devise abstracting theories of the "laws of nature," when the very rhythms of the earth and its living things might give us instruction by more intimate means, if we would listen? The Indians listen; they have not forgotten how. Could a man do both? Be an individual possessed of differentiating intellectuality and think abstractly, yet have communion with the currents of life which play around and through him? Philosophical mystics have believed this to be quite possible, but mystical forms of communication are concerned with gradations of meaning not easily grasped by a coolly calculating and counting intelligence. They deal in unfamiliar orders of generalization, which tend toward inclusiveness rather than isolation.

Here again is something to be learned from the Indians. Counting and naming make a kind of blasphemy to them, when applied to hidden areas of meaning. When the people of the pueblo found that a visitor who had questioned them went away to write a pamphlet "defining" their beliefs, they were horrified:

> "Now I will tell you what you have wanted to ask," he said quietly. "About this grievous thing, this terrible book of paper." His voice lowered. "It tells all—all," he repeated tonelessly. "All about our pueblo, our customs, our beliefs. It gives our names!" He paused to let this dreadful fact sink in, and then in a voice that expressed the greatest horror and sadness possible, he said, "It has given, on paper, for all to read, even the names of our kivas!" . . . . "I don't know what will happen. . . . Perhaps it is the end of our good life."

The Indians, it seems, find their strength in unsayable things. The white man, who has great skill in elaborate saying, mistakes the sayable for the knowable, and by attempting to say *everything* he shuts out awareness of things that matter most.

Will books like this one bring better understanding of the Indians and help us to solve our problems of racial minorities? *The Man Who Killed the Deer* was not written with this purpose. Understanding ourselves must precede understanding the Indians. The crises which come from the encounters between modern and older races are not really met by "studying" these people. They are not another species of "they," but an aspect of ourselves. Understanding *them* in order to *do* something is really beside the point. Somehow, Mr. Waters gets this across.

COMMENTARY
THE "RAW MATERIALS" COSMOLOGY

THERE are fashions even in serious thought. Some fifteen or twenty years ago the importance of basing one's philosophy of life on a "cosmology" was often urged, on the ground that a man's moral decisions need the light of thinking about his relations with the larger world around him. In those days, however, this suggestion could not get very far, since the mechanistic dynamics of scientific cosmology tends to reduce man to a quite accidental tenant of the cosmos, a being with nothing to contribute and quite unnecessary to its functioning.

Today the considerations under which the cosmological question is raised have a different tone. The universal interest in "ecology," while arising out of anxious concern to preserve a natural environment that will continue to support human life, is beginning to acquire ethical dimensions. The theme of man's *obligations* to the rest of nature is no longer strange and unfamiliar. There are even hints that man may have duties to perform, services to render, to the cosmological whole. Josiah Royce's proposal that what any universe needs is a moral agent to make it better may obtain vigorous revival if this tendency in thought keeps on strengthening and spreading.

By contrast with this view, the cosmology of an endlessly exploiting technological civilization appears visionless, morally self-indulgent, and grubby in cultural effect. Technology's "pragmatic" approach to the universe is no more than a brash, acquisitive search for "raw materials." It disdains inquiry into whether natural processes and other forms of life, perhaps in worlds beyond ours, have independent meanings to fulfill, even destinies to complete. In fact, this question now arises only because Nature has at last begun to "answer back" to the mounting scale of human depredations. Some law of diminishing returns is affecting our proud operations. Unexpected losses in the wake of various "conquests" of nature have begun to exceed the gains. The ills of "progress" multiply faster than the remedies or means of controlling them. And the military "necessities" of our progress have become so anti-human that the consciences of all men must now choose between being dulled or violated.

What then *is* the world, if it is not a store of raw materials—deposited to our account by a curiously negligent deity or cast up by a vortex of mindless forces—for our voracious consumption? This question is not likely to go out of fashion. A misused and suffering world demands an answer.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
BOOKS AND OTHER THINGS

IN the *Nation* for Feb. 16, Ivor Kraft, who teaches at Sacramento State College, airs the frustrations of a reviewer of books on education, then turns to appreciation of some good ones. Noticing John Holt's latest, he calls the author "one of our five or six best educational critics," and the frustration disappears entirely when he comes to *In the Early World* (Pantheon, $7.95), by Elwyn S. Richardson. Apparently New Zealand is a great place to develop teaching ability. Sylvia Ashton-Warner unfolded her remarkable talents there, and Richardson, Mr. Kraft tells us, spent ten years in a remote part of New Zealand "learning how to become a true teacher." Why does this happen in New Zealand? Perhaps because teachers are left absolutely free to teach. Mr. Kraft reports of this author:

> He seems to be a rare human being, a man with an artistic-scientific bent and a feel for nature, a man whose rejection of sham and whose search for the honest expression of insight is remorseless. Somehow, he learned to create a free classroom atmosphere at the Oruaiti school where this view would prevail and evoke the best efforts of children . . . . In this self-contained single-teacher Oruaiti classroom the children became first-rate potters, wrote splendid poetry, and made lino-cuts so strong and so filled with the vitality of childhood that they seem to spring into life off the pages.

The reviewer makes some general comments on education which help to explain why even very good books on teaching have such slight effect on common practice. The books surely ought to be written, and yet, as Mr. Kraft says, *"In the Early World* will not teach teachers to do what Richardson did." Later he adds:

> Will anyone be helped by these books on education? Many will be inspired by reading *In the Early World,* but whether this is "help" or not I do not know. Some parts of some of the others may help a little. How very little, when all is said and done, have books on education altered what goes on in schools, and how very much cultures do impose their purposes on the schools. And yet it seems to me that there is a deep purpose in teaching and learning which persists and will persist through many cultural changes.

What questions are by implication posed here? Mr. Kraft seems to be saying that "inspiring" people are hard to come by, and difficult to imitate or follow, yet they nonetheless give expression to the "deep purpose in teaching and learning." How, then, could we take better advantage of the qualities of men like Elwyn Richardson? In one place the reviewer asks:

> Is Richardson's work generalizable to the schools of New York, Los Angeles and Akron? Perhaps, if we could find half a million Richardsons and snare them into the classrooms. In our population of 200 million I do believe that they can be found, but our present pedagogical establishment would soon begin assiduously to weed them out, and most of our parents would not raise a whimper.

This, if we read Mr. Kraft correctly, is a judgment of the now prevailing pedagogical establishment. In his discussion of Robert Bendiner's *The Politics of Schools,* after approving this author's assessment of local American school boards—that "their chief power is to prevent change, and their chief weakness, inability to innovate"—he finds Bendiner weak "on the all-important matter of federal clout, finance and initiative." Apparently, Mr. Kraft believes that national authority could bring much needed improvements over the narrow and often backward decisions of the boards. Mr. Kraft served in the past as a specialist in child development with HEW (Health, Education, and Welfare Department), which may account for his confidence in a federally guided educational establishment. He says:

> We are one nation working toward one national system of education. There will always be room for citizens' involvement in educational policy, and schools should be allowed to blossom variously in the field; but the American local board as we now know it is merely a 19th-century remnant.

In the long run, however, would centralized authority in education be really better than local authority? Eventually, we might find ourselves

desperately wondering how to free education from heavy-handed political control. The great teaching in New Zealand came simply from turning teachers loose. Would a nationally controlled system dare to do that? *Could* it?

For contrast with hope based on a system growing out of "federal clout, finance and initiative," we quote from a summary of Gandhian ideas on education which appeared in MANAS for Dec. 13, 1967:

> *Education and the State*
>
> Education must be free from State control. The students have to be educated in an atmosphere of freedom from outside interference.
>
> Society should have direct control of education, not the State.
>
> The wise men of society should have control of education.
>
> The people are the highest authority. The State derives its power and authority from the people. Education must therefore be in the hands of the people.
>
> If the country is to be saved from Hitlers and Mussolinis education should be freed from State control.
>
> State control leads to a mechanical standardized pattern of education for the whole country. Education should not be set in a mould. If education is independent and free, there would be a rich variety of curricular programs.
>
> The State should not prescribe text books for compulsory study in schools. This leads to indoctrination.
>
> The State may offer general guidance and advice to educational institutions and leave it to them whether to accept it or not. The State may also suggest text books and curriculum but should not enforce them.
>
> Educational institutions must be free to offer the students the education they think best.
>
> Education should be free from State control even as justice is.

Well, a rejoinder is obvious. The power of the State is needed to overcome the stubborn backwardness of local school board opinion. The dedicated men in Washington, D.C., have better understanding and clearer ideals.

Perhaps so. But why aren't these dedicated people more influential right there in Washington? Why don't they do a little *adult* education at the national level? A HEW Department that feels qualified to improve the culture of Podunk through Podunk's schools might begin to show the stuff it is made of by declaring that the first step in improving culture and education in all the Podunks of the land would be to put a stop to the anti-educational and anti-human policy of war—a policy made in Washington. A man working for HEW might also say to himself: "I can't really do much about American education at the national level until we prevent use of our educational and cultural and scientific institutions for military research. A national authority without sense enough to see how wrong this is doesn't really deserve to have a voice in the education of anybody." Of course, a *different Department* makes war. HEW people aren't like that. But do the HEW people really stand up and say they're not like that? Maybe some of them do, and then resign. A really splendid educational influence would start to flow out of Washington, D.C., if all the people working there decided that they couldn't work there so long as such terrible anti-educational influences are originating there, too.

FRONTIERS

On Danilo Dolci

THE present seems a time when several vital areas of human effort, long regarded as separate, are growing together and becoming a single undertaking. It is hardly possible, for example, to work constructively in education, mental health, or social reform without recognizing the deep interdependence of all three fields. Social reconstruction pursued in defiance of educational principles and neglect of the necessities of mental health is likely to be only a political gesture, and education which does not have psychological balance and maturity as its goal remains unaware of the most serious obstacles to learning.

A man who has distinguished himself in these three areas, yet is hardly known in the United States because of the narrow, specialist approach to human problems, is Danilo Dolci, the Italian architect, born in 1924. Early in life Dolci realized that he had "always been more interested in the structure of human relations than in the structural relationships of stone," and he became a new kind of reformer. He has written a number of books telling about his work with the most hopeless poor in Europc the peasants of Sicily—and *Fire Under the Ashes* (Beacon, 1965) by James McNeish is an excellent biography of Dolci.

Here we draw on an article he contributed to the *Saturday Review* in 1967 (July 29), as one of the "What I Have Learned" series. It contains verities which deserve renewed currency, since they could easily be made the basis of many sorts of deliberated social change—and, by implication at least, of education in behalf of both mental and moral health. In this case the ideas relating to education come out in what Dolci says about himself. He was not a "typical" student, but one who recalls Ortega's insistence that real learning takes place only in response to urgent, inwardly-felt need. Dolci writes:

> After I turned sixteen, gradually—I still don't know why—the need to read to acquaint myself through the printed word with the experience and thought of men who had lived before me, became so strong that if I had not found books in my immediate surroundings—on my father's modest shelves, in the libraries of friends, in shops when I could afford to buy—I would have stolen them. A normal day was now not long enough for me; every morning I got up at 4 (in winter I would put on my coat, to keep from shivering, and go sit beside the kitchen stove. . .) and for three hours before beginning my regular school day, I silently communed with *my kin,* at first more or less at random, then more systematically. Every morning I was deep in one of Plato's dialogues—at least one of the shorter ones—or in a tragedy of Euripides, Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Ibsen; then, going back to the beginning of things, in an effort to understand how men who had preceded me had interpreted the world and our life in it, I read the Bible, the Upanishads, the dialogues of Buddha, the Bhagavad-Gita, and on to Dante, Galileo, Tolstoy. I was truly happy.

Then, at twenty-five, an even deeper hunger was born:

> For several years I had felt a mounting need to take stock of what those different voices had told me, to distill the essence of what I had accumulated, and to compare it with my own experience of life, my own truth, my own intuition. But where was my own life? There was not much, and what there was had not been lived in accordance with what I had understood with my mind. What did I have that was truly valid that I could hold up against what I had learned? Was not all my learning second-hand? All around me, as I now saw, were people who thought in one way, spoke half the time in another and often lived, disjointedly, in a third; they were at best disorganized, incoherent, superficial, apparently sure of themselves, but without any deep faith in the possibility of changing themselves or the world.

Now Dolci was at the point where, in Ortega's view, true education begins. It is the moment when all that one has learned from others is felt to be unreal—when, "for the very reason that he needs, with such deep anguish, to know, he will think that this knowledge does not exist, and he will begin to unmake what is presented as already made." Dolci's way of learning for himself is now a part of history. Driven by his resolve to make his life of some use to Italy's impoverished peasants, he allied himself with them, worked with

them, lived as one of them. In the *SR* article he distills some of his findings:

> I became deeply aware that even as each man must take stock of himself and learn to live according to his convictions so the life of the group, community life, is an indispensable instrument for stock-taking and for individual and collective maturation. . . .
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> It was increasingly borne in on me that as long as people have not discovered through their own experience that change is possible, that even profound and drastic changes are possible, they are all too ready to say: "It has always been like this and it always will be." I also saw that while this was true of the backward agricultural areas, it was no less true of the industrialized zones, where many people have no idea that development can proceed at a different pace or in a different direction from what they see around them. . . .
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> Thus I learned that one must work with the people to create new facts, at all levels, so that they can see through their own experience that things can be changed, and how this can be done, and to provide the opportunity for real communication between persons of many different backgrounds and walks of life. . . .
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> It was essential to broaden contacts among individuals, to organize these largely isolated men and families into research-and-action groups increasingly aware of the need to develop resources by developing themselves; and to help the growth of those existing groups which were inclined to develop democratically. . . .
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> In order to build a new world, you must work with three basic tools: man, as the focal point of awareness and discovery; an open resource-developing group; and democratic planning of resource development. . . . I no longer think it possible to dissociate the struggle for social and economic development from the struggle for peace; even if we cannot be satisfied with haphazard and inorganic growth, so we have learned that a pacifism which is not rooted in social and economic needs is generally so much verbiage.

Dolci's published works include *The Outlaws of Partinico, Report from Palermo, Waste, A New World in the Making,* and *He Who Plays Alone.* These books tell of his encounters with Italian bureaucracy and officialdom, of his trials and prison terms, the opposition of the Mafia, and his hunger strikes. In the context of these activities the reader begins to feel the impact of Dolci's self-education. Dolci's life is not, of course, a universal "program." But principles tend to be sterile unless embodied in applications of them. Very simple ideas take on extraordinary power in Dolci's books.