

EDITORIAL

In an age largely dedicated to efficiency and technical excellence some of the questions that too often get missed, we fear, are related to the primary purpose or purposes of the educational enterprise. These are, of course, value questions. We are delighted that the submissions available for the present issue bear on these questions. What does it mean — to teach? What, in the late 1960's, can be seen as the role of the teacher? What is the human significance of the teaching act?

Some of the main teaching traditions, dating back almost to pre-history, are not difficult to identify (even to oversimplify). One of these is the tradition of the teacher as inculcator or indoctrinator, of the teacher as teller. A good indication of this tradition is to be found in the game of "Confucius say . . ." Unfortunately the only examples we can think of at the moment are not fit for printing in a respectable journal such as this. But we can easily find modern exemplars — Frances Gray Patton's Miss Dove, and other similar personalities that our readers can doubtless call to mind.

Then there is the more recent romantic tradition perhaps best associated with Jean Jacques Rousseau. In this tradition, diametrically opposed to that of inculcation, it is considered that child nature must be absolutely uncoerced and unfettered. The teacher's role thus becomes basically that of facilitating free expression for the learner. Increasingly modern names to be associated with this tradition are, of course, Friedrich Froebel, Francis W. Parker, A. S. Neale, and various proponents of the "free school" (although for accuracy's sake one would have to posit some significant differences among their general positions).

A third identifiable tradition has to do with confidence in hypothesis as a means of teaching and learning: truth and wisdom are regarded as open, the teacher being a guide who invites attention to all the alternatives and by rigorous questioning on them promotes maximum learning. Socrates hoped that by such means he could achieve secure answers on most questions, and even considered that he had amassed quite a bit of wisdom himself. The openness of this method makes it the forerunner of modern liberal disciplines in arts and science.

We hesitate to suggest a Dewey tradition, since it partakes rather ambiguously (may we say valuably?) of the latter two. One of its main characteristics is, of course, the greater tentativeness of conviction — a still more pragmatic approach to knowledge.

So much for traditions.

Enter now McGowan, who tells us among other things that Socrates isn't really that good a model. And Burbidge, who argues in effect that no teaching situation can be properly assessed without reference to the educational climate, to the *status* relationship between "teacher" and "taught." (Readers may want to compare Alan Thomas in our August 1967 issue.) And Cheong, who emphasizes the distinction between teaching competence and teaching philosophy (compare his reference to Buber's *I-it: I-thou* with McGowan's *Socratic: non-Socratic* dichotomy), and points a basic need for attention to the latter. This is the difference between operation or operations, on the one hand, and orientation or orientations, on the other. There may well be disagreement over the basic positions (especially the second position) with which Cheong begins his paper, and some dissatisfaction with the inconclusiveness of his *schema*. We therefore venture to hope, like him, that he will subsequently come closer to a resolution of this issue.

As a sociological (rather than a philosophical) commentary on much of the foregoing and on values generally, the editors are pleased to present the concluding article by Dahlke. This is, we believe, one of the most comprehensive attempts of its kind in so limited a compass — in effect, almost a textbook. It is not easy reading, but for orientation and perspective it is more than usually rewarding.

This commentary would not be complete without special reference to our *Communications* article by Thompson and Miller on "Foreign Teachers." The perspective which it provides is, we think, both timely and valuable.

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