EDITORIAL

The first article in this issue, *John Dewey's "City on a Hill": The School as a Model of Community,"* points up important qualities of serious educational discussion, by demonstrating the timeleness, the enduring interest, of long-argued educational questions. Indeed, one of Dewey's strongest claims to front rank among philosophers of education is the importance of the questions to which he addressed himself. Without in any way denigrating the quality of his attempted answers, it can fairly be maintained that his work remains important and timely because he concerned himself with major educational questions.

Most of this month's articles bear upon the issue which professor Goldstein has singled out in Dewey. Thus, when professor Jaenen examines the changing intentions of schooling for minority groups in Canada, he does so against the backdrop of the ideas of national unity which have prevailed, at various times, in Canada. National unity is not one with community, in Dewey's sense of the term, but it raises some of the same questions. How do various ethnic and language groups combine in the larger society? Can they maintain their separate indentities and self respect? What is the nature of a society which encourages diversity?

Since Dewey in no sense wished merely to adjust pupils to a standard and pre-established pattern of life, his sense of community is shot through with the strains of diversity and the need for individuals to work out roles distinctively their own. Much of his argument therefore touches on the questions of identity now so prevalent in educational discussion. When Professor Magnuson examines the changes in Quebec, resulting in a strong emphasis on the French language as the basis of a distinct culture and sense of identity, he is, in fact, exploring the basis of community among a major cultural group in Canada. As such, his examination necessarilty touches on issues important in Dewey's thinking. In particular, the changes in Quebec in the decade of the sixties raise questions about the value of diversity, the extent to which a group must distinguish itself from other groups if it is to have a distinctive existence, and the ways in which sharing in the commercial technology of Canada may, or may not, foster the unique aspects of French Canadian culture.

While Professor Miller's consideration of the process of self-alienation in

North America does not so obviously bear on the concept of community as do the articles previously discussed, it is clear that alienation in Fromm's sense of the term proceeds from the individual's sense of having no effective relationship to people and events around him. Miller, following Fromm, notes a sense of powerlessness, of being out of touch with any other person, as basic constituents of self-alienation. Clearly, this plight of the individual was important in Dewey's concern that men find meaning in their roles in an industrial society and that they come to understand how their own activities relate to larger social and economic processes.

If Professor Goldstein was right in concluding that Dewey failed to define "community" in the context of modern industrial society because the meaningfulness of individual acts could not be established (in a word, industrial society lacked the "large and human significance" which Dewey hoped students might discover through effective education), then the alienation which concerns Miller may be a result of fundamental social and economic conditions and may not be alleviated by changes in education. We seem thus to return to the familiar question of the relation of school and society.

The important points of contact among the four articles indicate the importance of the questions earlier raised by Dewey, and, in addition, demonstrate that articles written in highly specific contexts have wider ramifications. Thus, the articles treating issues in Canadian education lead out into the concerns explored by Goldstein and Miller.

Professor Zachariah, in questioning the quality of educational planning in the *Worth Report,* finds it inadequate because "it contains undigested mixtures of facts and opinions, abstruse pronouncements, lofty principles and detailed recommendations." This melange is the more unsatisfactory because it fails to take account of economic realities and existing social conditions. Professor Zachariah, then, is tasking the *Report* for failing to come to grips with realities and existent conditions which must be taken account of , and to some degree be overcome, if suggested changes in education are to be brought about. While this criticism is not predicated upon the issues of community, identity, and alienation which are raised in the previous articles, it is concerned with the relation between school and society. In the most general sense, the *Worth Report* is faulted for failing to consider the difficulties and limitations of educational reform which have been amply illustrated in the prior work of men such as John Dewey.

It is all too easy to reject grand educational plans and specific recommendations for dealing with a problem such as alienation on the grounds that schooling reflects social trends rather than determining them. To escape such categorical rejection we must have recourse to systematic argument which, taking account of existent conditions, at least enables us to identify some proposed reforms as plausible. A commitment to what we have reason to believe is both a valuable and a possible change then becomes the means to change in education. Failing such reasons and such commitment, changes in education are either capricious or illusory.