

are times when one simply can't avoid doing what one must do, or opt out of society altogether. . . .

It's the old educational dilemma of freedom of choice in continuing dynamic tension with social responsibilities or duties. I and Thou are inextricably linked and interdependent, yet always in conflict lest the one dominate or diminish the other. Phillips tries to cut this Gordian knot by suggesting that freedom is the good word and duty the bad, that the educational leftists are the good guys and all the rest bad guys or hypocrites. Does he *really* mean it?

J. M. Paton
Toronto, Ontario.

Universal Values and Different Cultures*

As I understand it, Dr. H. W. Kitchen's article follows somewhat the following lines:

Canadian society is undergoing a limited convergence of values on two planes. There is a horizontal convergence between regions which tends to meld cultural variations. There is a vertical convergence which tends to meld toward the urban middle class professional value structure. In the author's words, "The convergence, or tendency for Canadians to become more like each other . . . is largely of the urban, middle-class, large-scale-organization way of life." He sees this convergence as being due in part to mass media, and in large measure to our educational system which he finds to be predicated upon the principle of equal educational opportunity for all, but which at the same time promotes and exemplifies the urban middle class professional value structure. He suggests that the pro-professional middle class bias shows up in "texts and other materials," which portray disapproval of other classes and their values, "school regulations and disciplinary practices that emphasize private property and the avoidance of improper language" and "teaching methods that stress 'grammatical' speech and interpersonal competition." Such a system, he says, tends toward "cultural euthanasia" for all cultures other than the middle class. Then, arguing that there are very few, if any, universal values, Dr. Kitchen suggests that it is immoral to practice "cultural euthanasia" in the name of education. In other words, he is saying that (in his view) since there *are* no universal values there ought not to *be* any universal values.

This strikes me as exemplifying both a certain weakness and bad philosophy. It demonstrates weakness because, by implication, his rejection of universal values suggests that the author refuses to commit himself to saying the admittedly dangerous thing, that anything is good for all

*H. W. Kitchen, "Differences in Value Orientations: The Broader Implications," *The Journal of Educational Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (December, 1967), pp. 166-175.

men. It is bad philosophy for four reasons. To go from an *is* to an *ought*, as Dr. Kitchen does in going from "no universals" to "ought not to be universals" is certainly unacceptable, especially when he then argues from the universal, "there should not be any universals," that there should be universal respect for different value systems. It is also bad philosophy if Dr. Kitchen sees anything at all that is common about education as he wants it carried on in different cultures and sub-cultures. Does he see any sort of learning as common to any and all educational systems? Third, he uses an *ad hominem* appeal rather than cogent reasoning when he labels convergence toward the urban middle class value structure as "cultural euthanasia." Fourth, the author is inconsistent, because later in his article he proposes the universal that the "culture" should determine the individual's values and that anybody moving into a different culture should be helped, by the educator, to change his values and adopt those of the new culture into which he is moving. To say that one should adopt the values of the culture is nothing more than to say that one should adopt the values of other people. This shows up most clearly when the article claims as an example,

If farm youth in Prince Edward Island are moving into Ontario cities to work in large-scale organizations, their training for successful relocation should perhaps include not only technical and academic skills but a *change in their value-orientations*.

There is only one other small point. The article suggests that we must distinguish carefully between the 'disadvantaged' and the 'different' before attempting to upgrade any person's or group of persons' way of life. First of all, in using the term disadvantaged, the author implies that he has some conception (of which he does not make us aware) of what it means to be advantaged, i.e. of what constitutes the good life. Second, Dr. Kitchen does not himself do what he asks from us: he does not carefully distinguish between different and disadvantaged.

I have no argument with Dr. Kitchen's point that teachers and administrators would do well to take into account the value systems of their pupils in order to better educate them. One's values certainly affect one's attitude toward learning. Any suggestions for better acquiring and employing information about the value systems of individuals, sub-cultures and cultures for the improvement of teaching can only be applauded. In this area the article has much to suggest.

D. D. Jenkins
Calgary, Alberta.