

## EDITORIAL

The two lead articles in this issue, while seemingly so different, both address the question of responsibility for educators. That, in essence, is what a call to "commitment" is all about. The first is a refreshingly inspirational piece that is nevertheless philosophically grounded in the necessary connections between normative commitment and the educative process and that rejects as untenable the arguments regarding the value-neutral bases of rational autonomy. The second article, a gauntlet thrown to faculties of education, is grounded on the implicit assumption that we must become committed anew to the bases of the "epistemic authority" that constitute our calling. If our major task is to initiate students into the tenets of this calling, then we must more rigorously address problems on teaching "others how to teach."

The second argument, seeing the root of the major problem in faculties of education as essentially a cognitive one, demands a re-examination of "the shaky epistemological grounds of its claims regarding matters and manners of teaching." However, this assertion certainly does not preclude Hill's discomfiting observation that we as teachers (whether in the University or in the schools) are obliged to "love" our students in the *non-sentimental* sense of "willingly embracing a duty to care about their growth and welfare." Indeed, both articles plead for commitment and admonish us, gently or ironically as the case may be, for running with the hounds of "least resistance." Commitment to the educative process is necessary to our own well being, our student's well being, their student's well being, and subsequently the well being of society as a whole. Rightly Hill tells us that only after a thorough reappraisal can we begin to correct "that state of *anomie* created in many schools by a retreat from commitment." The result of this retreat has been a pedagogical "cafeteria service" offering the young another kind of plastic food in the form of "academic wares". Hill is neither complacent nor judgemental. The onus is a shared one. Students too must be committed to their task and they owe a debt to the larger community "for the original benefit of nurture are multiplied in voluntary involvements in communal life." Hill's commitment to community service is not separate from Orteza's "application of knowledge which is *public service*."

Orteza's argument contains a salutary reminder (tongue in cheek, admittedly, but nonetheless there) that unless faculties of education are committed to rigorous self-analysis, that is, committed to a genuine application of their epistemological roots, the schoolrooms will succeed only in perpetuating wastelands of hollow men. This perception is shared by Christopher Lasch, who wrote in *The Culture of Narcissism* with his usual pithiness that the prevailing symptoms of the retreat from commitment are "the spread of stupefaction" and the "atrophy of competence" which have had disastrous effects on students' minds with the risks of producing "moral monsters."

Under cover of enlightened ideologies, teachers (like Parents) have followed the line of least resistance, hoping to pacify students and to sweeten the time they have to spend in school by making the experience as painless as possible. Hoping to avoid confrontations and quarrels they leave the students without guidance, meanwhile treating them as if they were incapable of serious exertion.

Can I hear some mumbles and mutters that this is just another rallying cry for "back to the basics"? Not at all! The two authors would deplore any such retrogressive suggestions of

going “back” to anything. Instead they are challenging us to create new commitments, renew worthwhile past ones, and to discover the necessary relationships between the normative and cognitive aspects of education and teaching. Finally, they insist that we must act upon and transmit the *responsibility* that comes out of the process. The call to commitment is a challenge to timidity and the ultimate answer to reaction. “Commitment” cannot be a cover-up for nostalgia.