EDITORIAL

BREAD AND WATER

As a visitor to your bilingual country I might, with my native Yorkshire and my high-school French, make some sort of a show at being bilingual. As a reader of this Journal, with its declared policy of addressing acadamicians, teachers, administrators and the general public as well',[1] I do, faced with the languages of philosophy, psychology, sociology, and so on, make a poor showing as a 'multilingual' in this sense of the word. I take comfort from believing that the fierce expert will, despite all intentions, go straight to his particular domain and pay no heed to so eclectic an exhibition as an editorial.

Choosing my route, I shall walk first warily in the alien territory of behavior modification theory. Like its parent psychology, I believe, this may present us with a model of learning theory (or more strictly, of teaching theory), but cannot provide the ultimate justification for its own enterprises. Who, in the last analysis, is to modify the behaviour of the behavior modifier? Of course we can justify occasions when the educator will usurp an authority he cannot possess, but the justification has to be found outside the set of principles that govern the occasional action itself. There is in behavior modification, that is to say, a method educators may use, but there is in it no ethic for the educational process. For my part, therefore, I would go with George Kelly whose methods are themselves exponents of the philosophy that provides the ethic. Psychologists, he claims, are challenged "not only to predict correctly what a man will do under given conditions — or to master him momentarily by creating circumstances with which the poor fellow has not yet devised any alternative methods of coping — but also to join him in testing the limits of his unsuspected talents, including especially those that would enable him to surmount the circumstances by which we have hitherto sought to control him."[2]

Dr. Eric Mash's article in this issue is an interesting biography of an emerging psychological paradigm, and having read it I have no reason to assume that he would quarrel with the limited educational role I have assigned to the paradigm. Yet it seems to me the limitations need to be firmly stated: behavior modification, like Mt. Everest, is there, and if we are not cautious about it, educators and administrators may allow it to fill their horizons and blind them to important questions it cannot answer.

I share Kathryn Morgan's yearning for "the formation of communities in which human beings can grow and become loving and open and sharing and self-directing", and I am sure it was useful that she should take a philosopher's walk down one approach to this ideal and come back to warn us that there was no way through. Yet the route she explores seems an unpromising one, so narrow that I wonder how many educators have seriously set out to travel it. A growth model, interpreted more broadly, certainly suggests to me give and take between the organism and the environment at all stages, and recognizes 'environment' for many to be predominantly social. I too, for example, want to speak of the 'natural rhythms' of a child's learning, an image that

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[1]*The Journal of Educational Thought* I (1967), p. 1.

[2]George Kelly in *Clinical Psychology and Personality*, ed. B. Maher (New York, John Wiley and Sons, 1969), pp. 7-8.

Susanne Langer gives credibility to.[3]   But that such rhythms owe much to 'the initiative of the environment' seems indisputable. Language, to take a focal case, must be socially given, individually appropriated, and has a profound effect upon the rhythms of learning a child may develop.

If it is true that the progressive movement in American education failed because of lack of rigour in the thinking of those who put Dewey into practice, we have to recognize the value of the work done, and to be done, by philosophers of Kathryn Morgan's persuasion.

It is a sad day for an educational system when its top people grow out of touch with the problems of individual schools; and for a school when the principal grows out of touch with the life of the classroom; and it is a poor look-out for the class that has teachers who are not in touch with the diverse needs and interests of their students.   I do not draw the conclusion that students' interpretations of their own needs will dictate the nature of the system. At every point there are mediating interactions, and while decision making has to be much more fairly shared than is usual at present — a concern which occupies Daniel Linden Duke in the study he has contributed — a major role for teachers and administrators remains that of interpreting and providing for the needs of the individuals and institutions they are responsible for.   Our trouble today is that where there should be mediating interactions there are so often confrontations.   Robert Stamp's account of schooling in early Calgary tells a fascinating story of the growth of 'bureaucratic remoteness'.   Stand far enough back, and it is a staggering thought that schools might be held to exist to meet the needs of an educational system!   Such a view must breed confrontations.

To draw my own moral, if people were more in the habit of casting their bread upon the waters, there would be a good deal of free floating resources in the world.   But sharing our satisfactions in this way depends in the first place on finding them.   Every time a child, say in a Calgary Elementary school, takes up a task — writes, paints, makes a model of the dam he has visited, works out how much water it can handle in what ways — and finds enough satisfaction in doing it and in what he has done both to entice him on to a further task and to infect someone else with his interest, the educational system has genuinely worked.   It is a pity so many pressures in education today are brought to bear to prevent this from happening.

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[3]See for example, Susanne K. Langer, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), I.