

GANDHI'S ROOTS

MANY books, through the years, have been published about Mohandas K. Gandhi, some of which have been reviewed in these pages. The most interesting and enlightening of them all, however, may turn out to be a book which makes only passing reference to the cycle of Gandhi's life which brought him into extraordinary prominence in the eyes of the world. It is the period which came before all this—from Gandhi's birth in 1869 to his first return to India from South Africa in 1896—that supplies the content of Pyarelal's *Mahatma Gandhi—The Early Phase*, published last year by the Navajivan Publishing House. (This is the first book of a series which, when complete, will have six volumes, the final two, titled *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, having appeared in 1956.) While the author, who was Gandhi's secretary for many years, remarks that bringing out a book concerned with only the beginnings of Gandhi's life is like offering the first act of a play to an audience which has seen the last, it remains true that this volume enables its reader to *understand* the high drama which later unfolded in Gandhi's career.

The narrative has in it the sweep and meaning of history. While it indeed honors and is in honor of Gandhi, there is a sense in which it honors most of all what Gandhi sought; this, it may be said, is the only sort of tribute that Gandhi might have accepted or allowed. Little by little there emerges from Pyarelal's pages a sense of the deep struggle of human beings to know themselves, to find the light. Although Gandhi appears as the main protagonist, this struggle is the true hero of the tale, while its embodiment in Gandhi is the occasion for the book.

The author has spared no pains to give each sequence of events a rich historical setting. After a few words about himself and how he met Gandhi and committed his life to Gandhi's cause—

which the reader much appreciates—the author starts out, in the second chapter, with the story of Britain's military conquest of India, beginning with Clive's victory at Plassey in 1757. The account covers a century of outrage, pillage, and perfidy, glossed over by a piety which has had little to equal its pretensions until the present American apologetics for the war in Vietnam. Condemnation of the policies and inhumanities of the East India Company is almost entirely in the words of Englishmen—historians, scholars, scientists—so that the reader has hardly any reason to suppose that such judgments are "prejudiced." While no attempt is made to hide the weakness and vulnerability of India to British arms and exploitation, the fact that the impoverishment and ruin of the Indian people was accomplished during this "century of wrong" is put beyond doubt. The Indian cottage textile industry, productive of fabrics famous throughout the world, was destroyed to create markets for the cloth of the English mills. The agricultural base of the Indian economy was turned into a decay of continental dimensions by the infamous changes instituted by the British in land policy. The Indian farmers or peasants became a hopeless debtor class. The court system introduced by the British, of which they were so proud, corrupted the ancestral virtue of the Indian people by imposing upon them a pattern of legality which they could not understand, along with a system of administration which denied their natural abilities and suppressed their natural integrity. Item by item, what the British did weakened, demoralized, unmanned the Indians. Pyarelal says in a summarizing passage:

The deterioration of national character is the inevitable consequence of alien rule. India had been conquered before. But she had never lost her independence. Under British rule she, for the first time, became an appendage of another country. As a

result she was drained dry. But far more baneful than the economic drain was the "moral drain" that resulted from it. Owing partly to distrust of Indians and partly to cupidity, Indians were excluded practically from all positions of trust and responsibility in the administration of the country under early British rule. This was done in the name of efficiency. It actually made the administration both inefficient and corrupt.

While India was being bled white in behalf of the complacent shareholders of the East India Company, she endured the greatest indignity of all in the arrogance and race prejudice of the conquerors. This proudest of peoples suffered not only destitution, but was made to feel the casual contempt of the invaders, who treated the Indians not only as a defeated people, but as a people undeserving of human respect. The humiliation felt by the Indians was an acid test of their character, and, being human, there were those who became imitators of the British. This, in the eyes of many of their countrymen, was the worst degradation of all.

Against this background of tragedy, weakness, and insult, a process of rebirth for India was nonetheless going on. Pyarelal writes:

Experience has again and again shown that suffering, by itself, has no regenerative power. But in the case of India, beneath the surface stagnation there still rolled deeply the placid waters of life. Defeated, crushed, humiliated, she, with her rich cultural past and unbroken spiritual tradition, fell back upon that silent inner reservoir of vitality for a renewal of her strength. In less than thirty years after the great Revolt [the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857] had ruthlessly been put down, she was once again headed for national resurgence, which with many a setback went on gathering volume and strength till she was once again a free country.

Prof. Arnold Toynbee, in one of his lectures some time back, spoke about the "contemplative way of the creative withdrawal into the spirit, without which man may not live." This was, he observed, the Buddha's way. Two thousand years after, it became the way of India's redemption also. With her vitality at low ebb and a creeping paralysis coming over her, India in her bondage found the means of her national regeneration in her introversion where, in the words

of Romain Rolland, "the fires of her threatened life had taken refuge." The resulting inner transformation manifested itself in a sudden burst of renaissance in the latter half of the nineteenth century in all walks of her national life—religion, culture, art, science, literature, social reform, and finally, political activity.

Right here, in these few words, is the thesis of this book, and the principle of Gandhi's life, although its impact is hardly disclosed except by the development which follows. The texture of the Indian awakening is the subject of three chapters devoted to Indian religious and cultural leaders who, from Ram Mohun Roy, born toward the end of the eighteenth century, to Gandhi, born a little less than a century later, spent their lives in exploration and revitalization of the philosophic and religious riches of ancient Indian civilization. Their names are known to every reader about the East—Roy, Debendranath Tagore (father of Rabindranath), Keshub Chunder Sen, Dayananda Saraswati, Ramakrishna, and his disciple, Vivekananda. Among European and American influences contributing to awakening in India were the work of the Theosophical movement, carried on in India by H. P. Blavatsky and her American colleague, Col. H. S. Olcott, and the services of the British journalist, Allan O. Hume, who helped to found the Indian National Congress.

Basically, what was sought during this time of cultural revival was a sense of enduring human reality in spiritual roots. It was a renewal, in the nineteenth century, of the ancient quest for self-knowledge, revered in the East since the memory of man, but fallen into disuse, save for its formal aspect in religious tradition. These great figures of Indian history Pyarelal calls "Pathfinders," and each was responsible for a strengthening current of human dignity and self-respect in the common Indian life. Out of their work, and the response to it, was born the regenerating will which, under the leadership of Gandhi, broke the chains of servitude and brought the Republic of India to birth in the middle of the twentieth century. Whether the Indians will now, having political

freedom, be able to reach more deeply into these resources for the strength to support the new life of which Gandhi dreamed, remains to be seen.

For the great question posed by Gandhi remains to be answered in full. Is the full splendor of human life capable of being realized only through the "soul-force" about which the ancients, and every great spiritual teacher, taught? What *is* the power that should be sought by patriots and lovers of mankind in an age dominated by technological miracles and menaced by the unimaginable forces now in the possession of nations armed with nuclear weapons?

The chapter given over to Gandhi's place of birth is filled with fascination. Kathiawar, on the west coast of India, is a small state rich in Hindu tradition, first overrun by the Muslims in the eleventh century. At the time of the British invasion, it was ruled by a "multitude of kinglets," some of them having a realm no more extensive than a village or two. Gandhi's ancestors were for generations *dewans* (a kind of prime minister) in one of these kingdoms, called Porbandar. His grandfather, Ota Bapa, having by an act of principle incurred the wrath of the *Rani* (Queen Regent) whom he served, early in the nineteenth century, locked himself and his family in his home and waited for the Rani's troops to shell them to death, as she had sworn to do. Fortunately, the British Agency intervened and Ota Bapa moved to another place, his house and property being confiscated by the Rani. The following conveys something of his character:

When the Nawab of Junagadh [a neighboring state] learnt of this, he invited him to his Durbar. Ota Bapa went and promptly saluted the Nawab with the left hand. Asked why that discourtesy, he gave the reply that though a difference of opinion had forced him to leave off service of Porbandar State, it made no difference in his allegiance. His right hand being already pledged to Porbandar, he could offer to the Nawab the services only of his left hand.

The Nawab was pleased with Ota Bapa's courageous reply. "I would give half my kingdom to have a minister like you," he said. But Ota Bapa told him that he was done with service. To maintain him

the Nawab appointed him *Karbhari* of Kutiyana Mahal and issued an order exempting him from payment of the customs duty in case they should wish to carry on business in Kutiyana. At the same time, to keep up appearance, he awarded him a nominal punishment by requiring him to stand in the sun for a few minutes with his shoes off!

Gandhi's father, Karamchand Gandhi, says Pyarelal, "inherited all Ota Bapa's genius—his brilliance, integrity, statesmanship and independence of mind."

There are chapters on Gandhi's childhood, his marriage to Kasturba at thirteen—"Two innocent children unwillingly hurled themselves into the ocean of life," as he said later, although the union grew into a devoted partnership which lasted sixty-two years—and his schooling in India. Helped by relatives and friends to go to London to study law, he arrived in England in 1888, where he read law, kept up on current events, became confirmed in vegetarianism, and, "except for aping the English gentleman" for a while, developed into a very serious young man.

Pyarelal now launches into a discussion of the intellectual ferment in late nineteenth-century English life. Through his vegetarianism, Gandhi came under the influence of Anna Bonus Kingsford, a mystical Christian; Edward Carpenter, and Henry David Thoreau, another vegetarian and much more. In 1890 he met H. P. Blavatsky and Annie Besant. He enrolled as an associate member of the Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society, later explaining that he did not become a full member because of his "meagre knowledge" of his own religion. "What appealed to him in Theosophy," Pyarelal says, "was the doctrine of universal brotherhood." It was by this means that he came to know Edwin Arnold's translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, of which he said: "It opened to me a new view of life. It touched my spirit as perhaps it can only touch a child of the East. I had found at last, as I believed, the light I needed." Upon his return to India in 1891 (he had been called to the bar in London and enrolled in the High Court in June of

that year), Gandhi found little to do. He continued his religious investigations, begun in London, and, following Indian tradition, sought a *guru*, but decided that, "as in the case of his quest for one perfect religion, it was the quest itself rather than the finding of it, that constituted the seeker's prize." Truth alone would be his *guru*, he resolved. But while seeking truth, he also needed a job, and the disappointments he experienced, especially the rebuffs of the English *sahibs*, were hard on him. After two years of somewhat aimless activity, he was glad to accept a call from an Indian firm in South Africa, which needed a barrister for a complicated piece of litigation. Gandhi took ship for Durban in 1893. After a week's acquaintance with his young countryman, his employer was confident that he could do the work planned for him and shipped Gandhi off to Pretoria, where the suit was to be settled. Meanwhile, Gandhi got his full personal share of race and color prejudice in South Africa, being made to sit up all night in the cold at a stage-coach way-station, and having his ears boxed by an officious coachman. It was now certain, one sees in retrospect, that Gandhi would be drawn into the struggle of the Indians in South Africa for their rights. However, in the author's words:

Gandhi had no idea at that time that the close study he was making of the Indian question would be of any use to him in future or lead to anything further. For he was looking forward to returning to India at the end of the year, after finishing his case. He did what his immediate duty demanded of him in the environment in which he was placed. He did not care to see the "distant scene." In the philosophy of life that he was evolving, success and failure had no meaning; there was no big, no small. It was all a part of spiritual striving. Unawares he was preparing himself for his life's work.

The remaining 400 pages of the book are a massive report of Gandhi's initial encounter with the forces of South African British race prejudice, its self-justifying strategy, its tactics of social and economic injustice. The English planters of Natal needed Indian labor to do the field work on their sugar plantations. The Africans wouldn't do it,

and the English couldn't. So, what with excess population and great economic want in India, jobless and hungry Indians were imported to South Africa to cultivate and harvest the cane. They came as indentured laborers, lived under unspeakable conditions, worked for a pittance. Finally, when their term was complete, some of them stayed in Africa as "free Indians," becoming small shop-keepers, truck gardeners and pedlars whose services filled a manifest need.

When Gandhi reached Natal, its population included 470,000 Zulus, 45,000 Europeans, and 46,000 Indians, of whom 16,000 were indentured workers, 25,000 ex-indentured or "free" Indians, and some 5,000 were Indian traders and their clerks. It was completely obvious to everyone that the Indian peasants were the backbone and muscle of Natal's economy. What drove the British frantic was the embarrassing fact that the Indians were also subjects of the British Empire and legally entitled to equal rights with other subjects, which meant that they could *vote*. Not many of them did (the indentured workers could not, anyway), but the British farmers, administrators, businessmen, and working classes were filled with horror at the possibility that they *might*. They had to have the Indians to work their farms, man their railroads, and perform divers other tasks either beneath the dignity or beyond the capacity of the English, but the horrid spectre of a "coolie" government seemed to them the only possible outcome of letting these people, who grew in number every year, continue to vote, in full political equality with the whiteskinned Anglo-Saxons who had won the country and were alone entitled to the riches garnered from the land.

The three years of Gandhi's first stay in South Africa, except for the months of the litigation he was hired to handle, were almost entirely devoted to a fight for the rights of Indian British subjects in South Africa. In June, 1894, when Gandhi returned to Durban from Pretoria, he read in a Natal newspaper the following argument

defending a bill to exclude Indians from the franchise:

The Asiatic comes of a race impregnated with an effete civilization with not an atom of knowledge of the principles or traditions of representative government. As regards his instinct and training he is a political infant of the most backward type from whom it is an injustice to expect that he should. . . . have any sympathy with our political aspirations. He thinks differently and reasons in a plane unknown to European logic. As a rule our political questions are as mystical and involved to the Asiatic understanding as their Vedic literature is to us.

Now Gandhi could not possibly go home. With the help of well-to-do-Indians of Durban, he founded the Natal Indian Congress, after the model of the Indian National Congress, obtained assurance of enough legal work to give him personal subsistence, and went to work. He pleaded the case of British subjects who happened to be Indian. He never exaggerated, never compromised on clear issues of principle, and he never gave up. Gandhi's memorials to the Government of Natal, his briefs in court cases, and his letters to officials were all models of dispassionate "European logic," and he patiently but persistently exposed every fallacy, every hypocrisy, every casuistry in the arguments to disfranchise the Indians. This section of Pyarelal's book has scores of quotations from the Natal and other South African newspapers, illustrating every conceivable twist and turn of the contentions of the Natal whites in their effort to sound "moral" while advocating extreme political immorality. One could go from C. S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* to the South African journalism of this period and find examples of every pious pretense Lewis' nasty little demons could think of, and many more.

Gandhi won this struggle, in that the Bill that was finally passed was devised by its authors to so effectively hide any intelligible meaning that no one could be pleased by it. Gandhi had forced his British opposition to take refuge in an Occidental obscurantism that left no one but the Indians with any real self-respect. Meanwhile, Gandhi's complete integrity in argument gained him the

respect of every Englishman capable of seeing where justice lay. Of these there were many, although far from a majority.

But this was only the immediate "firing line" of Gandhi's early career. His personal life was occupied with renewed search for Truth and the meaning, in action, of Truth. The later pages of Pyarelal's book have long interludes concerned with Gandhi's self-examination, his studies of Christianity, and his discovery of the religious and social philosophy of Leo Tolstoy. More than seventy-five pages are devoted to Tolstoy's religious investigations and conclusions, and his total rejection of violence in both personal and political life. "Tolstoy," says Pyarelal, "had also indicated a blueprint of a plan of action by which a non-violent revolution could be effected." The chapter on Tolstoy concludes:

The Kingdom of God Is Within You contains in outline practically the whole of Gandhiji's programme of non-violent non-cooperation. How Gandhiji elaborated the Tolstoyan doctrine of non-resistance and gave body to it in his movement that brought India her independence we shall see. In this he was helped by the teachings of two other savants—John Ruskin and Henry David Thoreau, whose philosophy he synthesized with Tolstoy's. We shall come to this in the next volume.

This book is worthy of its subject. There is no special pleading in it. Human greatness becomes credible in this balanced and unpretentious story of an epoch in which struggle is both fulfillment and preparation for a larger field of action. Gandhi, the reader is slowly helped to realize, was both herald and embodiment of an idea whose time has come.

REVIEW

A SORDID BOON

READERS who feel discouraged about their efforts to understand Marshall McLuhan (*Understanding Media*, and before that, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*) will enjoy the lucid explanations of Howard Gossage in *Ramparts* for April. The key to the meaning of *Understanding Media* is in its subtitle—"The Extensions of Man." Mr. Gossage, who is a San Francisco advertising man, puts the gist of McLuhan's thesis in a paragraph:

To begin with, what Professor McLuhan means by a "medium" is any extension of man—whether it be a book, an automobile, an electric light bulb, television, or clothes. His theory is that the media a man uses to extend his senses and his faculties will determine what he is, rather than the other way around. To give a simple example: a car is certainly an extension of a man's legs. Moreover, when he drives a car he has in a sense amputated his legs. He is an amputee just as surely as though he had lost his legs first and then looked for a way to get around.

Before getting too deeply into amplification of this view, we should like to contradict it, since the dramatic impact of the McLuhan interpretation of human life needs an antidote during the process of experiencing it. The contrary proposition—by no means new—is that "the media a man uses to extend his senses and his faculties will determine what he *isn't*"—that is, will make up the spectrum of transient, ever-changing images or illusory ideas of the self.

This is not to say that Professor McLuhan is "wrong." Indeed, he seems brilliantly right. The question rather concerns what he is right about. One could argue, for example, that the McLuhan volumes are magnificent handbooks for manipulators. Of course, they don't *have* to be used in this way. No insight into the mechanisms of human behavior requires that people become Grand Inquisitors, Hidden Persuaders, or Walden Two-ers, turning their knowledge into rules of control, or into techniques of management for the human use of human beings, but that is what

happens when theories of control are the only theories of human nature around.

To find another theory of man, you have to go pretty high on the scale of religio-philosophical readings of meaning, and this, as any champion of the dignity of man or advocate of human freedom will tell you, is likely to lead to extreme unpopularity unless you keep such theories to yourself.

Even if you read Mr. McLuhan carefully, you still find it practically impossible to get an idea of man which is not some aspect of the extension of his environment. The big question left to the reader, then—and left unannounced—is what is the important *constant* in the human being, behind all these successions of change in his environment, in his instruments of perception?

Mr. McLuhan has produced high excitement among people who are in the environment business—and this includes a great many of those who have something to sell. These people are not deeply interested in grave philosophical issues of human identity. The first sentence of a feature article by Tom Wolfe in the *New York Herald Tribune* last fall (Nov. 21, 1965) shows where McLuhan arouses the most action, and why the question we raise is not more widely asked: "There are currently hundreds of studs of the business world, breakfast food package designers, television network Creative Department vice presidents, advertising media 'reps,' lighting fixture fortune heirs, smiley patent lawyers, industrial spies, we-need-Vision board chairmen, all sorts of business studs who are all wondering if this man, Marshall McLuhan . . . is right."

It is McLuhan's contention that learning to read has a vast indeterminate influence on the way people react to their experience—reading in large measure becomes the form of their experience—and shapes their lives more effectively than any particular thing they happen to read. Howard Gossage describes reading-thinking:

one word after the other, one sentence after another, one paragraph after another, one page after another, one thing at a time in a logical connected line. The effects of this thinking are deep and influence every facet of a literate society such as our own.

Reading filters, isolates, orders and logically digests the panorama of experience according to the Gutenberg medium—the printed page. The reader becomes schooled in abstraction. He thinks selectively, he can take his time, and his thoughts make a bookish kind of sense to other readers.

But the various media of electronic communications—which McLuhan compares with the environment of preliterate societies—flood into the senses without any rational spacing. You get a spate of visual and auditory images all at once. The differences between the youngsters of today and their Gutenberg-conditioned parents, McLuhan maintains, is caused by the electronic environment. As Gossage says:

McLuhan's theory is that this is the first generation of the electronic age. He says they are different because the medium that controls their environment is not print—one thing at a time, one thing after another as it has been for 500 years. It is television, which is everything that is happening at once, instantaneously, and enveloping.

A child who gets his environmental training on television—and very few nowadays do not—learns the same way any member of a preliterate society learns: from the direct experience of his eyes and ears, without Gutenberg for a middle man. Of course they do learn how to read too, but it is a secondary discipline, not primary as it is with their elders. When it comes to shaping sensory impressions, I'm afraid that Master Gutenberg just isn't in the same class with General Sarnoff or Doctor Stanton.

Mr. McLuhan exhibits what might be termed a grand Hegelian indifference to *individual* programs. Good, bad, indifferent, it doesn't matter much, in his view. The modification of the environment by a new extension of man's perceiving apparatus—this is the thing. As we noted in an earlier review (MANAS, Jan. 26), Mr. McLuhan rejoices in what he terms the "unifying synesthesia" that television has brought to the

sense-life of intensely literate populations—"such as they have lacked for centuries." He actually believes that the unfulfilled longings of men like Blake, Yeats, and Lawrence to communicate in terms of a "unified sense and imaginative life" are now vicariously realized in television—which is, he claims, "above all a medium that demands a creatively participant response."

One might end here with some bitter wondering about whether Mr. McLuhan thinks there is any difference, for readers, between good and bad *books*. (According to Gossage, "He regards *Finnegan's Wake* as the most important book of our era and the one that has done the most to chart his own explorations.") It is probably more constructive, however, simply to acknowledge that Mr. McLuhan is a technical thinker whose contribution lies in analysis of the mechanisms of contact with the world around us, and the changes they work in how we think and feel.

In other words, you have to bring your value philosophy to Mr. McLuhan. He doesn't really have any of his own—none, that is, that shows. His delight is in the discovery of analogues—as between the town crier and the TV commentator—not in the mood and content of the impressions given, nor in the myth revealed. With this warning, we may be able to learn from him.

The preliterate man depended a great deal on intuitive readings of sense experience. Better than the book-reader, perhaps, he grasped the import of symbols, the clues of symmetry and the fulfillments of dramatic unity. Now we have a technological imitation—an electronically fabricated mirror—to replace living tapestry of the ancient, "organic" field. It is true enough that divisive, analytical reason has less of a role. Spontaneous emotional synthesis brushes aside the bookish syllogism.

But what we have not got, along with this scientifically engineered "primitive society" of ours, is the hero with a thousand faces who informed the longings and lifted the visionings of

so-called "primitive man." A new Ulysses does not leave once more Calypso for his native shore. Mr. McLuhan insists that it does not matter; that only the twang of the strings is needed, and an edited tune on an electronic autoharp is the same as the lyre of Orpheus, with or without the enchantment of Orphic song. He has indeed produced a fine statistical analysis, a pure behaviorism, a diagram of elegance and finish unpolluted by moralizing motives and uncomplicated by utopian dreams. It is not half so difficult as it seems to do this. You need only leave out what is distinctively human; you have only to forget about man.

COMMENTARY

THE EDUCATIONAL GOAL

THE accomplishment of Belle Duhnoff (see "Children") with "Pete" is a striking illustration of the potentialities of what Joan Bondurant calls "nonconventional leadership"—which means leadership independent of political authority or institutional constraint. The point, here, is that Mrs. Duhnoff, because her school is private, was able to act in a way that would have been practically impossible in a public institution. She was free, that is, to do what she saw was *necessary*, if Pete was to be given a chance to get control of his own life.

The idea of nonconventional leadership is developed by Miss Bondurant (in her contribution to *Leadership and Political Institutions in India*, eds., Park and Tinker, Princeton University Press, 1959) by quoting Vinoba Bhave's explanation of the difference between his *Sarvodaya* undertakings and the work of Indian leaders in government:

I am sure were we to occupy the position and shoulder the same responsibility which they do, we would act in much the same manner as they. Whoever occupies office and wields governmental authority must needs think in a narrow, cramped and a set circle. There can be no freedom of thinking for him. He finds himself, as it were, under an obligation to think and act as the world seems to be doing.

And Jayaprakash Narayan, asked why Gandhi would accept no political power, said: "Why? Simply because he knew that legal authority would not help him to establish such a society as promised the good of all people, the *Sarvodaya* pattern of society."

The limitations imposed on institutions created and sustained by political action come to be taken for granted as practically "laws of nature" by people who have no liberating contact with the spirit of independent action for educational (and therapeutic) good. But when there exist many examples of the rich fruit of such work, even public institutions get "loosened up"

and administrators begin to exercise more of the daring that education requires. But the goal, of course, is not merely a chastened or mildly released sort of public administration, but a society which has enough vision and individual discipline in it to allow this "private" sort of freedom to become the universal rule. Explaining the Gandhian vision, Jayaprakash said: "The creation of a stateless society begins here and now, and is not relegated to a remote and imaginary period in the future."

CHILDREN

... and Ourselves

UNORTHODOX ADMINISTRATORS

CONCEIVABLY, the attitudes toward "administration" reflected in the Aug. 3 lead article may be loosened up a bit by a change of context. Without the rigidities of "bigness," educational administration can be seen as an immeasurably valuable activity, hardly distinguishable from the best kind of teaching. We have two illustrations. Following is the first:

In the mountainous state of Caldas, in Colombia, are more than a hundred rural schools which were built by a woman who, if she is still alive, is now eighty-five years old. She gets the basic building materials from the state department of education, has a permanent crew of eight workmen, and with these primary necessities goes to a village, stakes out the corners of a block structure of the size needed, and sets the local people to digging foundation trenches. Usually, the state doesn't supply enough money to build a good school, so Doña Eladia Mejía raises additional funds by selling village handicraft products from a booth at local fiestas. In 1909, Doña Eladia entered the teaching and charitable order of St. Vincent de Paul, but when her father killed a man in self-defense in a political quarrel, she was expelled (because of a local rule) from the order. That was when she started building schools, the first being for the children of the workers on the rancho where she took refuge. Other people saw what she could do, and her career was launched. She now gets fifty dollars a month from the state. According to a *Reader's Digest* account (March, 1963)

For 66 years Doña Eladia Mejía—sometimes described as "half dynamo, half clown and half Queen Victoria"—has been teaching in schools or building them with her own hands. At last count she had built 138, plus four hospitals, a number of child-welfare centers and fire houses, and half a dozen orphanages. Her simple construction methods and system of organizing community effort have been adopted by

the state of Caldas as the official "Plan Eladia" program for rural education.

Now the *Reader's Digest*, one would think, is not a prime source of material for this department. However, there is something starkly magnificent about this woman's achievement. She was, and is, herself a teacher, of course. She became an "administrator" because she was determined that children should have schools. "Schools," she said, "are the only things that will keep these children from growing up like their fathers."

But things are so *different* there, we shall have to say. How can the inspiring opportunities of an under-developed land be duplicated in an "advanced" technological culture? This is a question, only, of preserving awareness of the vital area of human need. In the *Los Angeles Times* for May 30, a staff writer, Dorothy Townsend, describes the work of Belle Dubnoff, who founded the Dubnoff School in North Hollywood in 1948. Miss Townsend calls it an "educational therapy" school, and for our purposes here, that is about all we need to know. The kind of thing accomplished in the school is illustrated by the development of "Pete," who was expelled at the age of six from the first grade, and who reached Mrs. Dubnoff ten years later, after two years at Camarillo. He had behind him a distinguished career in juvenile delinquency, starting off with petty thievery and vandalism, and when he came to the Dubnoff School he had been labelled "schizophrenic" by the hospital doctors. At sixteen, when Mrs. Dubnoff first saw him, "He was a beautiful boy, sullen, withdrawn, answering in monosyllables," and, she added, "He wasn't going to have anything to do with any of us." Miss Townsend tells the rest of the story:

But she took him on, tried to win his confidence and displayed confidence in him—confidence that survived strenuous tests ranging from his rifling her purse to taking off with her car and credit card for a 7000-mile joyride. Alone, of course.

Mrs. Duhnoff thinks the trip across the country must have gotten something out of his system once

and for all. In the two weeks he was away she did not call the police. "I just waited," she said.

He came back and eventually paid her back for all the gasoline he had charged on her credit card. . . .

Reflecting generally on life with Pete, Mrs. Dubnoff said:

"I don't think I ever pressed him. I would level with him. He would come in and talk to me and pretty soon my purse would be rifled. I told him, 'Come and ask me for money and I will give it to you. I don't want you to steal from me.' His psychological turning point was when he learned to trust."

After he had been at the Dubnoff School a year Pete experimented with delinquency again, but decided against it.

Another turning-point was when Pete, steadily progressing, was asked to try to establish a communication link with a psychotic girl at the school. "She was really wild," said Belle Duhnoff. "She would spit at people. We couldn't handle her and we decided to let Pete work with her."

Under supervision, Pete tried to converse with the girl who was five years younger than he. He was not an adult, therefore not an authority figure in her eyes. The idea was that perhaps she would feel Pete could understand her better than a teacher. It worked.

Pete would talk to her, give her simple arithmetic problems to work, play chess with her and occasionally take her to the Ferndell Nature Museum.

"If she spat on anything I took her home," he said. "She loved animals but she would not join the human race. She was a crocodile, a monkey, or a black cat. Anything but a girl."

Finally, she began attending classes with Pete, and today she is in a private high school, while Pete is a counselor and assistant teacher at Dubnoff. He also works as a salesman in the afternoon and has finished a semester at San Fernando State College.

Well, by now, those who have strong opinions about the evils of "administration" may have generated a small head of steam, being eager to point out the irrelevance of *these* illustrations to what they are critical of. But our point is that

problems of this sort exist, in *some* form, in all educational situations, and that meeting them in educational terms is often a species of administration, regardless of the kind of institution one has or works in. Perhaps if Doña Eladia had been born in California, she would be smoking her black cigarros in a Synanon-type venture instead of waving a trowel at the Colombia villagers for whom she builds schools. There is still the problem of keeping children from growing up "like their fathers."

A person trained for educational administration ought to be a person who knows how to recognize where the human *need* lies and can generate the determination to cut through all the obstacles that stand in the way. If this means breaking out of situations hopelessly confined by cultural lag, then it means just that—breaking out and starting something new. Training in educational administration, if it means anything less than this, is not educational. What it must mean, if it is to deserve this adjective, is the fostering or design of situations where a maximum of the kind of learning that is needed can actually take place. For then, all the wonderful things which administrators ought to be capable of are likely to happen. And in the case of Mrs. Dubnoff, we have a fine illustration of how an "administrative" decision did release *another* person's creativity and did employ *another* teacher's wisdom. Pete did for the thirteen-year-old girl spitter what Mrs. Dubnoff couldn't do.

FRONTIERS

A Sample of Linguistic Philosophy

FROM various provocations, including the claim, quoted last week from Lewis Feuer—"It is essentially a training in disputation in the medieval tradition"—we have been looking up Linguistic Philosophy. To illustrate his own sense of the confinement of this sort of inquiry, Prof. Feuer tells a story:

More than a decade ago, a philosophical dialogue took place between Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet diplomat, and Christopher Mayhew, until recently the British Labor Government's Naval Minister. "What philosophy do your philosophers teach?" asked Gromyko. "Philosophy in Britain," replied Mayhew, "is concerned mainly with the meanings of words." Perhaps it was not very constructive, he added, but it helped in understanding the errors of Marxism. Gromyko was puzzled. "But what is your own philosophy?" he persisted. "Is this glass I am holding real or not?" Mayhew was not sure.

Feuer, who has visited Russia, goes on to remark that when young Soviet thinkers look around for an alternative to the official doctrine of dialectical materialism, "they rarely turn to the writings of our academic philosophers, with their treatises on language and morals." Instead they read Camus, Berdyaev, or Niebuhr, since they cannot "find philosophy among the academic philosophers."

Now what is interesting about the academic philosopher we looked up is that he does indeed concern himself with the "errors" of materialism. And while his discourse does resemble what little of "medieval disputation" we have been able to sample, and also gives close attention to the meaning of words, the conclusions reached at length—a very great length, to be sure—seem very much worth while.

The book inspected is *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* by Sydney Shoemaker of Cornell University (published in 1963 by the Cornell University Press). Disclaiming in his preface any

high Socratic intentions or questings after "immortality," the author explains that his purpose is simply to validate the claims of common sense (that is how we understand him) against the materialists who assert that the word "I" doesn't mean anything "real." Prof. Shoemaker is a skillful arguer. At any rate, his argument wholly persuaded the reviewer that he is both "person" and "substance." To this extent, the 260 pages were not wasted. There is a further lesson, however, which grows out of the analysis of statements by David Hume, who is Prof. Shoemaker's chief whipping boy. (One is incidentally led to wonder *why* the common-sense feeling of the reality of the self has been abandoned in recent centuries.)

We shall try to show in a few lines how Mr. Shoemaker vanquishes Mr. Hume. Hume wrote:

There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our Self; that we feel its existence and its continuity in existence; and are certain beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity. . . . For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other: of heat or cold, or light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself without perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. . . . And were all my perceptions removed by death, and I could neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is further needed to make me a nonentity. If anyone, upon serious and unprejudiced reflection, thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. . . . But I venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle of perceptions which succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity, and which are in a perpetual flux and movement.

Now this is called the "bundle theory"—a view Prof. Shoemaker girds himself to reject. He does it most effectively on page 79, where he points out that since the subject, "I," has not the attributes of objects, and since Hume won't look at anything but objects, in what amounts to a cavalier (and really frivolous) search, he of course

finds nothing but objects, and these, "upon serious and unprejudiced reflection," supply him with the "bundle theory" of denial of the self. In Prof. Shoemaker's pleasantly light-hearted language:

. . . anyone who "looks into himself" [as Hume looked] in an attempt to find a referent for the word "I" is rather in the position of someone who looks in his bureau drawer in search of Platonic forms; he cannot be said to be looking for something at all.

As for our attitude toward other "selves," a passage toward the end of the book is equally illuminating. While we may use and treat people as objects, we do not do this when we *communicate* with them. We then think of them as *selves*, for only selves grapple with meanings, and communication is concerned with the interchange of meanings. A climactic moment in Prof. Shoemaker's argument comes when he says:

It would be misleading to [speak of] a *belief* on our part . . . that people who use the words we use generally mean by them what we mean by them. It is rather a matter of attitude of the way in which we respond to a person who is talking. (Here I am guided by Wittgenstein's remark: "My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul.") If this attitude were one of belief, we could inquire into the grounds of the belief. But this is just what we do not do. It is part of the expression of this attitude that the question of what justifies us in regarding what others say as testimony does not arise.

The sum and substance of such finely drawn arguments is that man is not a "thing." It is the demonstration, on a common sense basis, that converse between subjects ought to be recognized as converse between subjects, and not tortured into a pseudo-scientific denial that subjects exist. It seems fairly clear that the linguistic philosophers have inherited, for the content of their field, the vast body of scientific polemics against the compromised subjectivism of theology, and that they are doing what they can to restore the dialogue about meaning to the status of interchange of ideas between *souls*. No scientific "rank" has the authority to deny this meaning of dialogue. While the religionist cannot claim the

authority of "revelation" in order to reach a particular theological conclusion, neither can the materialists and mechanists deny the reality of subjects by insisting that man is properly identified only by his "objective" or "explainable" attributes.

What is most needed, perhaps, is the realization that discussions of this sort are not impoverished because it becomes logically necessary, first, to affirm simply that man is a subject, and second, to stop right there and say nothing more—heroically resisting eager impulses to "define" the self. The discovery that the self, while real, is beyond limiting definition, is not impoverishment. It may be a very rich conclusion indeed.