

# A Basic Kit to Confront the Human Disposal Authority, Department of Subnormal Affairs of the Monolith, in this Land of Opportunity<sup>1</sup>

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## I. Overview

I began teaching in 1949 and soon after embarked upon a career with the so-called mentally retarded. In the subsequent years, I learned that:

1. People traditionally underestimate their potentials for changing or, to use a more common term, for learning.
2. Our pessimism concerning the conditions of change become a self-fulfilling prophecy. We don't learn when we become convinced that we can't or when we become convinced that we shouldn't.
3. Given proper conditions, it can be demonstrated that intelligence is plastic, i.e., intelligence is a function of practice and training. That we have not been able to accomplish such change in people is, I believe, less a defect of this hypothesis than it is of our practice.
4. I believe in a design of things. And I believe the design for all of us holds nothing but good.

But, as I once remarked in an address before the Massachusetts Legislature, there is a dark side of every mirror, a side beyond inspection because it is without thoughtfulness (Blatt, 1970). And while the optimism and pride of our lives is for the gains made in civil rights, for our few achievements in mental retardation, for the concept of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, surely a dark side in the evolution of our civilization in this mid-20th Century must be reserved for the deep un-

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remitting, unrewarding lives of drudgery and pain we inflict upon our institutionalized brothers and all others who are needlessly segregated.

I said to that Legislature, and I believe even more firmly today, that **NO RESIDENT** of a state school needs to live in a denuded condition, needs to be a head banger, or needs to be locked in solitary confinement. Practically every resident can be taught to eat meals independently, can be taught to live among his fellows without being a danger to himself or to others, and without the use of physical restraints. All building odors can be eliminated without the need for even more repugnant chemical treatments or electronic gadgetry that mask the sources of these odors but do not eliminate the causes: filth and neglect. I even have some evidence that intelligence is educable; people can change—learn—and this concept applies both to the retarded and those who minister to their needs. It applies to us too! We can change in our conception of human potential and, thus, we can promote change in others and, ultimately, we can create a society that does not need closed institutions. The lives of Anne Sullivan and Helen Keller speak volumes about this concept, as do the lives of Jean Itard and Victor, the Wild Boy of Aveyron.

First, the Monolith of mental health; now, the Monolithic educational establishment! Many in our field identify the Monolith as the special class, the segregated curriculum, or the institution. True, yet not true! Certainly, one side of the disability Monolith is the educational establishment, as the other side is the mental health establishment. But the Monolith is not the teachers' college, not even the special class, the segregated curriculum, or the institution. The Monolith is created and sustains itself from a near-absence of *alternatives*. That is what the literal meaning of the word suggests. The education Monolith involves a network of seemingly open, but closed, systems that are not systems but integral parts of The System. The mental health-mental retardation Monolith is not the institution, but the fact that there are no viable alternatives to the institution. The disability Monolith—traditional special education and traditional mental health—is the one-way narrow total environment, planned and implemented by the city, the state, the institution, the school. Further, the problem is not with officialdom's good intentions but with a limited vision of human potential and what the world may yet become.

What are the consequences of such unitary approaches? What results from a system that has forgotten the difference between special education and special class? What is the price society must pay for a contemporary system that has too little vision and a fragile optimism, where one's hope is to expect a future that is little more than a larger mass of the past? In



that culture, to know where one is going will require merely to look back in anguish. In that culture, Man would not learn from history; he would relive it and relive it again. It may be that such a culture is required, not only to produce but to sustain policies supposedly on behalf of children with special needs that, in reality, deprive them of basic developmental opportunities. Some may claim we, in this age, are products of that culture.

And what is the promise that special education was to keep? We have been faithful, we have supported humanistic precepts and philosophies, we have believed that there is "enrichment through difference." The promise of special education has always been, and remains today, not a special curriculum, or special methods, or even special teachers. The promise was the gifts with which this movement was to endow us: optimism and belief in the human ethos, charity and love for our brothers, a concept that all human beings are equally valuable as human beings, the conviction that our work is not to judge who can or can't change, but to fulfill the prophecy that all people can change. Each person can learn. The promise of special education was to demonstrate to all people, and especially to those of us most intimately involved, that each of us can contribute to the larger society and that each person is his brother's keeper.

There are two sides to the mental health-mental retardation Monolith, the education-special education-school side and the medical-mental health-institution side, certainly not clear-cut dichotomies, certainly overlapping, certainly not all-inclusive but, nevertheless, having a relatively logical distinctiveness as well as an interaction. Yet, there is more distinction than interaction; although their organizations are fundamentally similar, deal with similar populations, and have similar values and objectives, special educators know precious little about institutional caretakers—and vice versa. Obviously, grossly horrifying institutions that you have read about, and some of us have seen, are "different" from most conventional schools. But in several basic ways the people are not "different"—neither the caretaker nor the client, each a victim and each a victimizer. In the institution, and in the school, there are not sufficient options for children with special needs, for families, and—of equal importance—for teachers and other staff. Possibly, for that reason if for no other, in institutions and too many schools, one generation's vipers is another's heroes; that which is one's disdain is another's enthusiasm. Possibly more than in open environments, institutions and schools are vulnerable to the fashions of the moment, fashions that dupe us to believe that we are the height of chic and enlightenment. Possibly, had it not been for the Monolith, we would have

kept our promises, our commitments to ourselves and others; special education would have led to something more, something grander, than the creation of the largest and the most pervasive segregated special class and institutional system known to civilized people.

What is the promise, the belief? That people can change, that—as human beings—all people are equally valuable, that a human being is entitled to developmental opportunities, and that development is plastic—educable. I have also learned that, for the promise to be kept, for these things to occur beyond the wish or fantasy, I must begin with myself. Before I ask the world to change, I must change. I am the center of the beginning step.

## II. *The Perspective*

The Old Testament commands us to speak the truth and to so respect language as a reflection of one's truth that we must not take oaths. For, even if one fulfills an oath, the responsibility—the risk of failure—is too grave and, thus, the oath itself is sinful. There is even the admonition not to engage in "innocent" idle gossip for, all too often, such "harmless" talk leads to slander or meanness. Silence is golden. Powerful stuff! But, there are lessons to be learned from such commentaries on our language as analogies of our total selves.

Those in Academe—we, who supposedly live not by "truth" but by the pursuit of it—subscribe to the Biblical precept: Beware of he who too often proclaims his integrity, his promise to accomplish good deeds for people; and, beware of those who have found the "truth" and reveal it to save us. In the Old Testament, the burden in just making a promise is too awesome for ordinary people to contemplate. And, in the Academy, one is cautioned to speak with care, or not to speak, and to write with a very special care, or not to write. In the Academy, hypotheses are generated, then tested, then others generated, then retested—and, all the while, otherwise brave men can not do more than test the null hypothesis, engage themselves in experiments or surveys that lead only to an acceptance of the null hypothesis (i.e., there is no difference) or a rejection of the null hypothesis (i.e., a dismissal of the hypothesis that there is no difference). We have neither the tools nor the tradition to test whether there had been a significant difference, for example, between those who received



special Treatment A in contrast with those who received ordinary Treatment B. Only by indirection do we study the effects of special treatments, special environments, special opportunities, you-name-it special interventions.

And yet, within the nature of the writer/thinker—that which is surely embedded in the very words “writing” and “thinking”—is the belief that one’s work, one’s prose, rings true, and there is a faith that truth has its own beauty, and conviction its own value. For, there is also a creed of the professor which is to profess, and a creed of the active man, which requires the initiation of events, not reaction to them. And the writer, the thinker, the professor, the activist, all—each—want most that their works be taken seriously, want that more than anything else, i.e., more than that people care for their words, their books, or even their behavior.

With admonitions from the past and the now-realities of Academe, too many scholars appear afraid—of being wrong or wronged—appear intimidated by critics, colleagues, their shadows, and other ghosts. There is a joylessness in our literature, and it is suffocating us while advancing neither science nor mankind. How many books does a person remember? How many ideas change him, possibly change others because of him? Name that handful of human beings whose ideas so profoundly influence us that our own scholarship, our own works, would have been different had those ideas not been part of the scene. The fascination of living through, being a part of, this period of American education and psychology is its own reward because—in spite of the pessimists and their arguments—we have had our share of unique human beings whose ideas and influence will remain long after their books and words are forgotten. This has not been a completely barren time, not a period only of despair. Therefore, admonitions notwithstanding, one who has participated might feel obligated to document the period, both for those who missed the excitement and for those who were there but missed the excitement.

And, so, this so-called scholar’s kit. Created from small accomplishments, but better intentions, I want to list some of the ideas, a few of the people and movements that still influence our lives, that “see” us through the dark nights and long days. I want to record the works that deserve an ear, and maybe a few that deserve one’s totality. I want to synthesize, then analyze, then synthesize again, for as we read and write too much, one notices that few among us are doing those things. Few are thinking about what we have become, what we have accomplished for people, what it all means for people, what the world has been, and what the world is about

for the disabled, the sick, the “different,” the frail, anyone in jeopardy.

Hence, this kit for all those who seek to do battle with the mythical-but real Monolith and with what I call its Human Disposal Authority, especially its Department of Subnormal Affairs. The kit may prepare you to begin to prepare to think differently about people, their natures, their capacities to change and contribute and rise to new heights. The kit may help a little as a person gropes to comprehend himself, his mortality, his intelligence, his conception of his capability for changing, and *his* unfolding. The kit discusses the works of people who share an optimism concerning the human potential. This is a basic kit, hopefully not contaminated by the conglomerate affairs of big business and institutional technologists and, as with all basic kits, stripped down. This kit has flaws, defects, weaknesses, holes. It will neither review the research exhaustively nor deeply. It will neither cover all aspects of educational programming and treatments for children with special needs nor feel the requirement for such coverage. That is, some of the holes and some of the flaws may be part of whatever is good about it. For example, children are, after all the polemics are voiced, just children.

Is there a need in a paper on special education to say something about each of the categorical disabilities which are, in reality, administrative rather than scientific designations? Possibly, it may be more important to communicate that the world is dull for most people because our lives are made dull by the blandness, the sameness, of home and school and almost everything. Possibly, it may be more important to tell of people who should belong to humanity but can’t find a way to join up. Possibly, it may be more important for us to understand that the problem facing special educators isn’t just one of helping the “unfortunate handful” but also in bringing to so-called typical people opportunities to grow through their involvements with what Dick Hungerford (once the director of the largest public school special class system in the world) called “difference.”

What I have been trying to say—but have been intimidated by those whom I fear may misunderstand—is that this paper is less about the so-called handicapped, and what we can do for them, than it is about people and what we must do for each other. For example, our society will be more civilized when equality of educational opportunity not only becomes an individual’s right and the group’s responsibility, *but* the individual’s responsibility and the group’s right. Will there be a day when I—I!—will feel that, not only am I entitled to an equal educational opportunity but that I have the right to live in an educated society; and, therefore, I am franchised only when you are franchised.



What is the trick? The trick is to both guarantee such entitlements and deliberately maximize human variance. The objective is to offer each human being opportunities to live in peaceful surroundings and engage in one's work and interests—within a community, included, not hidden away, in a land where no longer will there be special institutions to cage a human spirit.

### III. *Sins of the Prophets: A Short Prejudiced History*

Psychologists and sociologists have never helped a person understand why he creates madhouses and why he refuses to destroy them. This may be the proper time to turn to historians and poets for such help.

Historians would describe the world as it is, the people, the places, the forces that brought them together, and those that caused their alienation.

Poets would describe the world as it should be, as it could become.

Historians are unfettered by the constraints imposed on other social scientists, constraints that require computation of averages and normative models.

Historians record and discuss real people, events, and places.

And poets, uncluttered by the past, untarnished in the present, and uncowed with prospects of the mysterious, would study our history and lead us to new and better ways.

History is the basic science. From history flows more than knowledge, more than prescription, more than how it was, but how we might try to make it become. Although the one thing we learn from history is that we do not learn from history, it is the basic science. Physics is a history. Mathematics is history. Chemistry is a history. Humans have two unique gifts: language and creativity. The way we express history is the ultimate utilization of those gifts. If there was but a poet with such talents and interests to record this history of the care and education of people with special needs, much could be revealed; possibly, great discoveries would be made. While we await the contributions of more gifted historians, the following may temporarily fill the breach.

In the beginning, humans were created, and then humans created the criteria for being human. In the beginning, such criteria were simple, so simple that criteria were not important. When no person had language, humans managed without language. When no person had tools, humans

managed without tools. In the beginning, the mere emergence from a woman's belly made one human.

Then, humans discovered their hands and their fingers. Subsequent discoveries led to the invention of laws, books, print, civilization, science, and attempts to control the environment.

During the interim, humans sought new understandings of themselves, their relationships with others, and with a higher being.

And, all the while, criteria and new criteria were invented and stipulated, first to classify, then to separate and set aside, eventually to defile, to dehumanize, to murder.

People with special characteristics—the blind, the deaf, the retarded, the special for a time, or the special irrespective of time or culture—became consistent targets for those who would separate one human being for another. With each separation, prophets would announce that solutions to problems were at hand, the light at the end of the tunnel would now shine brightly. Desperate and sick humans would now be saved.

The ancients had their solutions, not humane but honest and without sham. Go, mother, take your sick child to the mountaintop; there the gods will decide who should live, who should die, who will be inscribed in the Book of Life or the Book of Final Decree.

So they went, some to the mountains, and the Hansels and Gretels to the forests. But, our "priests" told us that God was not pleased. Go ye not to the mountains and the forests. Thou shalt not kill. We, the State, will take your child in our asylums. We will care for the sick, the mad, the idiot child that you have spawned and let loose in this cruel and hard world.

Give us your child to minister unto.  
Give us this forsaken being whom you have loved.  
Give us that progeny who has no future.  
God and the State will serve all beings.

And, so, they came,  
From the farms and the villages,  
From the great and the weak,  
Innocent of the ways of priests and prophets.



And the State kept its word,  
If not its faith,  
Kept its covenant,  
If not with God, then with the Devil.

First hundreds,  
Then thousands,  
Then hundreds of thousands,  
Tomorrow, millions may inhabit our hells on this earth.

Again, certain prophets told the people that the God-State was not pleased with the work of these faithful servants. We must design new homes, small homes, regional homes, half-way homes, group homes, normalized homes, unit homes, extended care homes, but we must keep separate those who belong with us from those who do not. We must guarantee to families who have a child with special needs that the family will be here and the child will be there. This is a Great American Dream.

Consequently, it was near-universally agreed that it would be good if special homes for mental defectives were created. The doctors believed that such homes would be healthier for eligible patients than precariousness of community existence. The psychologists believed that such homes would prove more therapeutic than other arrangements. The educators believed that such homes would provide greater developmental opportunities than public community facilities. The economists believed that such homes would be less expensive. Public safety officials believed that such homes would be more protective of *both* the general society and the defectives themselves. The politicians believed that such homes were what the people wanted. The parents thought that they should be grateful for whatever was allocated to relieve their problems. The defectives, not expected to think, were not asked to comment on the matter.

Only poets—not the doctors, who proved to be wrong, or all the others who, too, were wrong—saw the world differently. Poets comprehend this life through eyes that see differently, ears that hear differently, minds that think differently, and souls that feel and dream differently. Therefore, poets—neither shackled by the past nor contaminated by the future, not trained as technicians and, therefore, not constricted by tradition—were the first to describe accurately what had been wrought for the so-called

defectives, and they were the first to envision a different promise, a different world for people—a world yet to be created.

#### IV. *Histories, Vanities, and Delusions*

##### A. Research

History can be a strength of mankind, or its anchor. We can learn from it, or the only thing we learn is that we don't learn from it. History can be the basis for science, for progress, for creativity—or it can justify our vanities, with the games it plays, and those we play. History can lead us to freedom, or it can continue to delude and, thus, enslave those who would, who could otherwise be free.

In this field we call special education, history has not served us well. We have not learned from it. It has made us almost hopelessly vain, when we should have been humble; satisfied, when we might have been constructively impatient. Examine the history of special education for the mentally retarded. Note well the discrepancy between the research and the practice; yet, note too that research in the broader social sciences has neither prohibited poor practice nor stimulated good practice. Possibly, some among you may then conclude that research is little more or less than something for scholars to do and, probably, its major value lies in the process of doing it, rather than in the results or even implementation.

Since the early 1930's, hundreds of researchers, involving millions of dollars, millions of hours, and thousands of children and their teachers, have attempted to study the effectiveness of curricula, methods, administrative designs, and other factors that contribute to variance among special education programs for disabled children. Using the field of mental retardation as one example, the dollars and the hours essentially have been wasted and the products are generally useless. It isn't that the research has been dishonest or, even, "untrue," but merely trivial or irrelevant.

For example, although one should hasten to note that the regular grades as they now exist are not proper placements for the so-called mentally retarded (but, on the other hand, who are they proper placements for?), research on the efficacy of special classes for the mentally retarded fails to indicate or illuminate the superiority (or even specialness) of spe-



cial classes over more conventional classroom settings. The earliest studies (Bennett, 1932, and Pertsch, 1936) comparing mildly mentally retarded children in regular and special classes found that special class children did poorly in physical, personality, and academic areas when compared with children in regular classes. Research by this writer (Blatt, 1956) was the first post-war study roughly analogous to those of Bennett and Pertsch. I, too, found that special class placements did not appear to enhance the development of these so-called mentally retarded children. Cassidy and Stanton (1959) and Johnson (1961), among many others, also conducted projects that were more or less isomorphic with the aforementioned studies, reporting results that were, at best, inconclusive; i.e., it has yet to be demonstrated that, by placing mildly mentally retarded children in conventional special classes, we meet their needs in ways that regular class placements cannot. Further, studies concerned with so-called trainable mentally retarded children have not been successful in demonstrating the superiority of special class placements (Cain and Levine, 1961; Dunn and Hottel, 1958).

A more recent review by Frank Garfunkel and this writer (1973) confirmed the continued popularity of these efficacy studies, as well as the continued profusion of research on curriculum and teaching methods. In one way, the abundance of research of this type is disconcerting and frustrating. In another way, we have learned important lessons from these efficacy and methodology studies—that is, if we remember those lessons well enough to take them seriously. For, if we could but learn from history, what might we learn? The accumulation of evidence vis-à-vis special classes, special curricula, and special methodologies leads to the clear rejection of the special versus the regular class dichotomy, special curricula—not special curricula, and special methodology—not special methodology as defensible independent research variables, i.e. controlled and identified sources of treatment. Although there may be rare exceptions to this conclusion, the regularity of data findings suggests strongly that children's experiences are not systematically different if they are, for example, in one or another class. A child can have individual attention, warmth, support, friends, and an exciting program in either class. Furthermore, his home varies independently of the kind of class he is in. For example, where certain children live contributes so potently to variance that the homes may well "drown out" the effects of any differences connected with education programming. (See Coleman, et al., 1966, and Blatt and Garfunkel, 1969).

Why is it that, on the one hand, there is a plethora of research activity

dealing with the effectiveness of curricula and methods and, on the other hand, a virtual absence of attention given to studies concerned with the effects of the home and community on learning and achievement? In view of enormous support to compensatory education and the subsequent documentation during the past decade of a persistent and pervasive relationship between socio-economic class and educational achievement (Coleman, et al., 1966; Hurley, 1964), one would believe that Rational Man might better appreciate that families and communities have a great deal of influence on the education and development of young children. Not only is the dearth of research dealing specifically with the home and community discouraging, but when such variables are employed as part of an intervention design, they are usually trivial in nature. They do not have particular meaning or importance, nor are they expected to contribute very much to the researcher's general understanding of the problems confronting him. For example, asking parents of Head Start children questions about how they feel towards their children, towards Head Start, or towards their community does not deliver revealing data. It amounts to using a teaspoon to do the work of a steam shovel. Similarly, attention to socio-economic status does not, in itself, attend to the relationship between poverty and the ways that poor families, or families with mentally retarded children, or any families, deal with schools.

Why? Why the disinterest in family-community studies and—in spite of discouraging history of neither research payoffs nor program development—why the continued adherence to experimental and quasi-experimental efficacy-curricula-methods studies? An answer may lie in the widely held belief that when one gets into other than traditional research methodologies, it usually requires many months of observation. Secondly, most researchers are loath to use the less well established instruments which have uncertain reliabilities and the long and difficult data collection procedures that characterize family-community studies. Probably researchers take satisfaction in doing relatively "clean" research, even if it may have neither meaning nor relevancy. For, like people elsewhere, researchers too have needs to conceptualize and pursue problems in "manageable" terms. A covert factor may be related to whatever biases researchers have concerning the concept of "change" itself. To discover that others can change, implies that the researcher too might have changed. He could be somebody other than who he is. Expectations for change are tied up with the lives of the expectors as much as with those for whom they have greater or lesser expectations. Designs, variables, procedures, and analyses are certainly influenced by these expectations.



However, although all of the above are reasonable explanations for the continued interest that researchers exhibit in traditional research which attempts to study the effects of stipulated interventions, it is doubtful that those reasons—even collectively—could continue to persuade intelligent and educated professionals to devote themselves to an endeavor that fails to reinforce either the researchers or their sponsors, the public at large. Therefore, there must be additional reasons for this pollution of feeble research on trivial problems.

During the years, and to the present time, many well-reasoned theories and methods have been presented to explain behavior and describe ways to modify behavior efficiently and beneficially (Blatt, 1967). We may label and discuss these developments either in terms of methodological pronouncements or in their fuller contexts—the application of method derived from theory. For the sake of simplicity, I will refer to the Montessori Method or Moore's Responsive Environments Method, knowing that they have rich and exciting theoretical histories that deserve discussion in their own rights.

An examination of the more spectacular methods that have been developed in pedagogy and psychology has led me to the following observation. It is based on reviews of the lives and works of such early greats as Itard, Seguin, Sullivan, Freud, and Montessori, as well as the study of contemporary methodologists, including Skinner, Frostig, Omar Moore, and others who have developed reading, mathematics, special and general methodological approaches to teaching children. It is suggested that each significant methodological contribution begins with an individual who is interacting with a child, or a group of children, in such a way as to promote extraordinary change. This change is noted by that individual and/or others and causes astonishment and excitement. Why are the children doing so well? Why are they learning to read so quickly? Why is mathematics no longer an horrendous puzzlement? Or, why is the sick person getting better? Closer attention than before is given to the interaction between the teacher (or therapist, or experimenter, or psychologist) and the child. A careful description of the interaction is reported.

From this inductive approach, a recording of the educational or therapeutic presentation is prepared; a new "method" unfolds. The teacher is teaching in a certain way, using a certain style, and promoting certain desired responses. Various people develop collaborations with the methodologist—but around the method. They study it in its original natural setting. They experiment with it. They refine and modify it. They become

infatuated with the notion that the gains they observe are dependent on the order, style, and materials of the presentation. They learn a good deal about this method, the responses it ordinarily generates, its frailties, the problems it creates and how to overcome these, and its most efficient utilization. They train others to use the method. They write books about it and develop elaborate ways to present it, test it, and relate it to a host of other methods, treatments, and conditions. Hence, we have literally thousands of studies completed on how almost infinite varieties of individuals behave, for example, in psychoanalytic settings, what the behaviors mean in innumerable circumstances, what responses should be presumed to be pathological and what responses are healthy.

There are several things that strike me about individuals who have been responsible for the development of spectacular methods. From an examination of the literature and from my own observations of the current scene, each appeared to be a gifted teacher and interactor. Each appeared to have a dynamic quality that attracted the attention of other individuals. Each appeared to have a powerfully charismatic personality that brought droves of disciples into the fold. Each was a great teacher!

An analysis of the research relating to spectacular methodologies produces other interesting conditions to speculate about. From the sensationalist method of Itard and Seguin to the present works of Doman and Delacato, Omar Moore, Bereiter and Englemann, the new math, and the special reading programs, certification studies of special methodologies find less conclusive, less promising, less significant results than those found by the method's originator(s). For example, Omar Moore has demonstrated a good deal more with automated or non-automated typewriters than have those who replicated his work. The most significant changes observed in children using the Doman-Delacato methodology can be observed at their Institute for the Development of Human Potential.

If a method has an integrity of its own, if it is not almost singularly dependent on the skill and interactive ability of the applicator and the social-psychological setting of its application, one would suppose that, for example, after more than a half-century of the analytic model, refinements of method alone would have caused psychoanalysis to have advanced beyond its current place in the psychological scheme of things. There is no doubt that some methods work well. Further, there is no doubt that some methods work better for some people than do other methods. Still further, there is no doubt that some methods are more logically conceived, implemented, and utilized than others. There is a great deal of doubt that any method is very far removed from those who employ it, understand it, have



faith in it, and experiment with it. There is only assurance that great teachers have great methods and poor teachers have poor methods—irrespective of the methods the teachers employ, irrespective of the fact that, regularly, great teachers and poor teachers utilize similar methods in contiguous settings.

Yet, the vanity and delusion are sustained, the vanity that we have effective curricula and methods, and the delusion that these contribute most to change in children. What does it matter if history could teach us that there are no especially superior theories and methods for studying and dealing with behavior, that there are only teachers and psychologists whose endeavors yield high productivity and others whose endeavors yield low productivity? What does it matter if precision and vigorous controls are just not available in the study of natural settings? What does it matter if we should have learned by now that only extreme changes in placement, procedure, or opportunity can possibly produce measurable effects on individuals? One hour each day for “enrichment,” a summer Head Start program, even a special class, much less a special method or curriculum, will have about as much effect as one could expect from a trivial intrusion into an enormously complicated human totality!

And yet we might ask, “What research should be done?” Or, “Not only *what*, but *why*?” For me, the *what* is implied, if not stated directly. Most educational researchers have used traditional designs, whether they were efficacy studies, follow-up studies of children in special and regular classes, studies of different methodological approaches, or studies of different curricula approaches. We believe there may be more appropriate ways to study teaching-learning environments, utilizing research perspectives that may be characterized as “process” and focusing on human interactive concerns rather than methodological concerns. As methods do not exist outside unique psychological-educational settings, only a naive researcher, or a cynical one, could conclude that the superiority of his method has direct and specific transferability to other educational settings. Our strategy recommends the study of children and adults in different educational environments, generalizing about their interactions rather than the procedures (methods-curricula) utilized to promote their interactions. That is, we believe that independent variation in the classroom obtains more from interaction effects (what we now, usually, try to neutralize or ignore in most experiments) than from methodological or curricula effects (what we now, usually, design as “independent variables”).

Why research? For that matter, why education? Do the products of re-

search, or education, make people smarter, more moral, more mentally healthy, more physically able? Is our President today, or the next one to be, more intelligent than Jefferson? Is this Pope or chief Rabbi more spiritual, a greater leader, than the first Pope or the first Rabbi? Is there a connection between research results and practices? And, if there isn't, should we be disturbed about the matter?

Research, and education, are activities that cannot be separated from values and prejudices about people. And, because of that, the one who conducts the research is most affected by it, as the one who engages in his education is most influenced by the experience. Research is valuable because of its effects on the people who engage in it. If it's of help to the greater society, or disabled children, or the child you teach, all to the good. However, as unpopular as this may be to many, it should be stated that the history of research in the social sciences might lead to the conclusion that its primary value is for those who do it, and the payoff to the larger community results as those researchers and their various colleagues influences us.

The above considerations cause me to recommend that we should not promote studies that examine the effects of a special curriculum (or talking typewriters, or open classrooms) on, for example, the intellectual development of mentally retarded children. Those kinds of studies are literally doomed to demonstrate little and to hardly influence even the researchers. Better, we might study a group of children and their teachers, and their schools, and the families of the children, and the community. We might better study how the effects of our intervention changed the “traffic patterns” of parents *vis-à-vis* their relationships with the school, rather than how the intervention stimulated I.Q. changes in the children. We might better study how the intervention influenced the community, the city fathers, and the media on such issues as equal educational opportunities, advocacy, options for people, and consumer rights and responsibilities. As long as we continue to study children developmentally, utilizing single-variable approaches, we will continue to exaggerate differences between groups as we attempt to minimize individual differences. We will continue to reinforce the position of those who claim that you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, that dull children must always remain dull, that nothing is curable and hardly anything is preventable. The dominant research strategy in our culture virtually guarantees the triviality of our research. However, maybe that is exactly what various vested interests count on!



## B. Teaching

The preparation of teachers, in special education, regular education, you-name-it education, has not suffered from a lack of discussion. However, as we said more than a dozen years ago, the preparation of teachers remains essentially an unstudied problem in education (Sarason, Davidson, and Blatt, 1962). Further, it is unstudied for the same reasons that research activities in our field are of little consequence. As researchers seek better methods and general solutions to pedagogical problems, professors in our teachers' colleges teach "best" methods and "best" curricula, hoping to fortify students with enough techniques for them to teach well and, so it turns out, to teach without having to think independently. The relationship between educational research and teacher preparation is so direct as to hardly permit the separation of one from the other, each activity mobilized in search of universal and happy solutions to complex problems and issues.

As did the chemists of the Middle Ages who limited their scientific and mystical pursuits to the search for the alkahest, the universal solvent, and the panacea, the universal remedy, we have among us modern alchemists who, in their quests for ways to educate the child, make the extraordinarily puzzling extraordinarily simple. In their distrust of the unknown, they return and thus drag some of us to some simple life of order and design, of cherished theory and trusted method. This foolishness continues for the same reason that young children maintain fantasy lives for long periods of time, and for the same reason that escapist adults believe that by ignoring a problem it will go away. We continue to "grind out" teachers whose methods reflect the concept that education is primarily what one puts into children rather than what one gets out of them, whose preparation had reinforced that concept, who—at best—can claim that they are good technicians and implementors. And, further, our technologies, our competency-based efforts, our new certifications or non-certifications are making matters worse rather than better. As one colleague recently remarked to me, there truly is a difference between a teacher who can demonstrate stipulated competencies and the competent teacher.

Still the educational enterprise endures its problems and critics with such stiff-necked forbearance that one might be tempted to believe that theirs is indifference to the slings and arrows. For, if not indifference, then what? There have been so many problems, so many critics, so many new

laws and law suits, so many new programs, money allocated, banners hoisted. Yet the problems continue and the critics multiply; but hardly anything changes. Why has the educational enterprise created franchised schools, on the one hand, and educational supermarkets to support them on the other? A better question might be, "Could it be any other way?" Given the circumstances of our teachers and their training, given the world as it is and what it was, one must answer that it could not be any other way, and the future portends yesterday.

The educational enterprise is a Monolith, no more capable of dealing with revisionism than any other Monolith, be it World Communism or the International Business Machine Company. Although there is embedded in any Monolith the possibilities for flexibility and change (or it crumbles), there is only such freedom as is contained within the parameters of rigidly enforced rules, regulations, customs, and values. Not far from the surface of every educational argument is that single block of ideological stone, that massive, solid, uniform, no-option, no-alternative slot machine of one system. It is found in children's classrooms because their teachers found it in *their* classrooms, because *their* teachers' teachers found it in *theirs*.

Within the flexibility of the system that encourages almost infinite varieties of methods and curricula, that fosters open schools which are contiguous to traditional schools, and supports both free schools and special schools, is an oppressive custom that demands allegiance to but one generalized commandment: *You will not create because you are what you are*. Let us seek the best way for all people, because one individual is incapable of finding it for himself. Let us develop together and thus avoid my confrontation with myself as creator as well as user, mover as well as follower, the responsible being as well as the responsibility.

We see that sameness of mind is the mortar that binds and strengthens the Monolith. In the elementary classroom a child who remembers well scores well; and in college the student who consumes and implements is preparing for the Teacher of the Year Award. Our colleges train technicians who, from the beginning to the present, seek competency. We train for technical skills as we train people to live apart from those who have lesser skills, or who appear different, or who think different, or whose metaphors are different. Essentially, our technical consumer education promotes an invariance of life and spirit, both by the influence of the technology on Man and by Man's subsequent behavior as a consumer bound by experience.



Consequently, the apparent—and in a sense, real—flexibility and innovation in our schools! We advertise segregated schools, open schools, free schools, and ungraded schools in the educational supermarket for the same reasons others advertise Chevrolet, Keds, and popsicles. We believe we have the best product or, at the very least, we wish to convince the consumer that—all things being equal—our products offer the most value. As a result, our schools virtually have become franchised—duplicative in the same way General Motors and Howard Johnson are duplicative—strengthened by our teachers' colleges who have always been educational supermarkets—"You don't have to (we know you can't) think independently, see all the goodies we offer, choose within this wide array, consume to your satiation level, beyond if you wish, buy, but don't create, don't struggle to understand the process from the product, don't go beyond the boundaries of the marketplace, be different, but don't be different from any of the rest of us, be a part of this wonderful educational slot machine world."

What does humanity receive for its educational investment? Without doubt, most children learn to read and write; some progress far beyond their teachers' hopes, some far beyond their teachers. It isn't that consumerism prevents learning; it merely interferes with it. To the degree that teachers do not discourage abstract behavior and classroom variance, learning (changing) must be given a better chance to occur. To the degree that teachers—elementary and university teachers alike—impose a standard curriculum, method, school organization, even content (possibly, especially content), the educational Monolith will thrive.

What we need more of are: child and teacher independence (thus fostering their interdependence), learning towards greater generalizations, inductive models, options, and the maximization of heterogeneous groupings of people. What we need less of are: mandated curricula, lonely teachers and children, segregated classes and schools—for whatever the reasons—consumerism to the discouragement of creativeness, and program consolidation.

In education, the Monolith is not the teachers' college, or the segregated class, or even the pedantic curriculum. The Monolith is created and held together from the rubble of destroyed options, from the absence of not so much the bricks and structures of alternative educational designs (for these, too, have been known to victimize those who hold minority views), but from the absence of alternative thinking and values. Yet, I must keep remembering what one perceptive student tried to teach us: Haven't we

learned anything from Henry Ford? It isn't nearly as efficient to build or service (teach) people individually as it is on an assembly line. I have been forgetting that the people I would want the schools to educate must "run" (function) efficiently and be "serviced" (satisfied) easily.

The Franchised School and the Educational Supermarket, the fulcrum of the Monolith, are the enemies of those who would seek an education for themselves. They are enemies not because of any deliberate wickedness, but because they represent a limited view of human potential and what the world can become. The world is each man, not multiplied but singular—unique and valuable; each man can create to help himself and, possibly, to help others.

In essence, I am suggesting that educational models be studied from historical rather than prescriptive perspectives. Curricula, methods, media, and school organizations might be understood best in the context of what was accomplished rather than what must be attempted. This strategy seems less restrictive and promises greater discovery and illumination than the traditional prescriptive "best method" strategy. The literature on pedagogy and psychology confirms this position, i.e. there is no consistent significant source of independent (treatment) variation obtaining from special methods, curricula strategies, or administrative organizations. Further, I believe that the process of creating educational environments contributes more to independent variation than the environments themselves, especially when these are artificially contrived from educational supermarkets.

Shakespeare said, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in it." To some educational researchers and those who utilize their products I rebut, "Though this be your method, there is mindlessness in it."

### C. Educability

Throughout my career I have been engaged in but one general endeavor. I have written books and monographs, studied and interacted with children and their families, the nature of that work always concerning concepts relating to educability, plasticity of development, the potentials each person has for changing. During the years my work has dealt with several recurring themes, each inevitably anchored to the hypothesis of mankind's educability. The first such theme deals with the so-called nature-nurture question. Although there is little scientific evidence that permits definitive answers to this age-old issue, I have concluded that



there is considerable clinical evidence that people can change, that intelligence is educable, that capability is a function of practice and training. The work of Itard, the autobiography of Helen Keller, the works of Mae Seago, Harold Skeels, Samuel Kirk, Seymour Sarason, and my own experiences and research lend support to the educability hypothesis. However, evidence aside, for but one reason dealing with the historic responsibility of those in the helping professions, I believe that this hypothesis is our only defensible hypothesis. That is, as my colleague Frank Garfunkel of Boston University once said, "There is nothing essentially inherent in retardation to produce handicap. Further, it is not the mission of teachers and other practitioners to find out whether or not that belief is true, but to make it become true."

The philosophical underpinnings of my research and other activities are strengthened by the belief that, as human beings, all people are equally valuable. Bengt Nirje enunciated this concept through the so-called "Normalization Theory." However, the religious and ethical teachings of countless others since the beginning of our civilization provide us with varied expressions of this idea and with a glimmer of hope that we will one day take it more seriously than heretofore.

Unfortunately, human beings have a penchant to segregate, to separate, to stigmatize, to make pariahs of other human beings and, more than ever before, we seem to be engrossed in such activities. On the other hand, I am encouraged that people today seem to want to discuss these issues. Further, at long last, the myth of such terms as "mental retardation" appears to be partially understood. The efficacy studies, the nomenclature changes<sup>2</sup>, the Black Revolution, and other scientific and social movements have led us to a better comprehension that, for example, "mental retardation" is no more than an administrative term. The words "mental retardation" have little, if any, scientific integrity. We had to appreciate that idea before we could take seriously the concept of educability. Or

<sup>2</sup> The most recent, little appreciated but astonishing, revision of the American Association on Mental Deficiency definition of mental retardation to include theoretical eligibility—i.e. psychometric retardation—to from one to two standard deviations on the "wrong" side of the mean literally revolutionized the incidence, prevalence, and concept of mental retardation, all with the simple stroke of Herbert Grossman's pen (1973). We cannot redefine measles, or cancer, or pregnancy with such easy external procedures. The Grossman Committee sitting around a conference table reduced enormously the incidence of mental retardation, never having to "see," or "dose," or deal with a client, only having to say that, hereinafter, mental retardation is such and such, rather than this or that. What, then, is mental retardation?

maybe it's the other way around; before we were able to learn that mental retardation is a contrived administrative label, referring to a current functional condition, we had to admit to a notion of human educability.

*Aun Apprendemous*; we are learning. More than that, learning—changing—need not necessarily proceed at an invariant rate. Even more importantly, educability need not refer only to children, but to their teachers, and their teachers' teachers, to all people. Most importantly, learning and knowing are not enough. People are essentially what they do, not what they think or hope. Not only should we consider the possibility that people can change, but, if we want to give that hypothesis a chance to prove itself, we must behave as if people can change.

Hence my preoccupation with the hypothesis of educability and with the development of strategies to promote the educability of intelligence. The literature relevant to the research in this area is vast, partly because it deals with problems as old as man, and partly because the questions asked and the answers given remain, to this day, far from clear. Perhaps, for our purposes, it might be enough to suggest that the evidence is ambiguous, some of the evidence suggesting that Man can change, while other research suggests the opposite. The jury is out—Jensen notwithstanding, Blatt notwithstanding.

For our purposes it might be enough to conclude this section with a definition of what I mean by "educating intelligence." Simply stated, educating intelligence may be thought of as referring to procedures and conditions that bring out or elicit capacities in an individual for changing rate and complexity of his learning performance insofar as school-related and other problem-solving tasks are concerned (Blatt and Garfunkel, 1969). The emphasis here reflects the Latin origin of the word, "education": to lead forth, to draw forth, bring out, elicit. Change may be measured through the use of intelligence and other standardized and informal tests. On the behavioral level change is reflected in the child's ability to handle with increasing skill the variety of problems confronting him as a student and as a human being. It is our assumption that change becomes both significant and possible when the individual: a) needs to change, b) aspires to change, and c) is optimistic about the possibility for change. Educating intelligence refers to more than hypothetical mental faculties or abilities. It also refers to attitudes about self, learning, and abilities, without which the phenomenon of change cannot be comprehended.

Alfred Binet, whose concepts provided much of the inspiration for our research on educability, was unable to create an environment to promote



intellectual development. Neither Binet's "Mental Orthopedics," Omar Moore's "Responsive Environments," our Early Education Program, nor any other known to us has been able to demonstrate convincingly that capability is educable. However, as long as one maintains a genuine interest in the concept of educability, or as long as one believes that the true vocation of the teacher is to help people learn, not make determinations about who can or can't learn, this is a type of research or clinical activity that demands continued involvement, regardless of the outcome of one's previous failures. Therefore, I continue to invest totally in an examination of the concept of educability.

We still have much to learn about the nature-nurture interaction, about the most efficient period to begin intervention, about the varieties of possible intervention models that may have the most desired effects, about better ways to study interventions, about better ways to study groups of children interacting with teachers and how they affect families, communities and cultures. It is all terribly complicated stuff and, for reasons brought out earlier, most research efforts, including research on educability, are doomed from the beginning to disappoint us. But, isn't that the reason why, at least, some "nativists" support the funding of Head Start and other studies of educability, to illustrate by such failures the attractiveness of a rational racism?

However, what has again and again been brought to us so clearly is that the "educability" hypothesis has a pervasive fascination that sustains the researcher, for the concept includes all people and so many things that it can easily intrude into every nook and cranny of our time and energy. The hypothesis refers not only to children, not only to the mentally retarded, not only to those in the inner city or those in the institution, but to the degree it has relevance for those groups, it has relevance for all of us—not only for children, but for their teachers, not only for their teachers, but for the teachers of their teachers. For a child to change, his teacher has to change. For my student to change, I have to change.

#### D. Epidemiology

Epidemiological research aims to define and describe conditions associated with specific disorders. It analyzes the incidence, characteristics, and distributions of such disorders, attempting to relate demographic variables to etiological factors. No careful epidemiologic study can be conducted without a great deal of effort and resources. And, further,

epidemiological study of the so-called handicapped places even greater burdens on the researcher. Review of our own study *Mental Retardation in Southeastern Connecticut* (Blatt, 1973) or any of the other serious investigations of the incidence, prevalence, distribution, and antecedents of disability (Tarjan, et al., 1973) reveal why there are relatively few comprehensive epidemiological reports in our literature, in contrast to the enormous contributions such studies might offer to the solution of both basic and applied problems.

However, there is a sufficient body of work available for us to have learned that the incidence (rate of occurrence) and, especially, the prevalence (extent of the condition in a specific group) of mental retardation depend almost precisely on such influences as definition and criteria, age, program supports, community resiliency, broad cultural values, social class, and other factors that provide compelling support for the position that the label "mental retardation" has more to do with political and administrative rather than with biological-psychological-scientific matters.

To describe mental retardation as a condition which affects two or three percent (or, since the Grossman Manual, one percent) of the total population is to be less than naive, is to camouflage reality, is to deny thought and reason with the hope that prayers to the Gaussian curve will bring happiness if not wisdom. After several years of intense involvement in our aforementioned study of the incidence and prevalence of retardation, we are persuaded that we are dealing with no more than one percent of the total population, and possibly no more than three-quarters of one percent of the total population, who at any one time need (or were known to have needed) special services because of their mental retardation. This is by way of saying that, although it is quite apparent that three percent of our population are psychometrically retarded (the test construction guarantees this in the exact manner it guarantees that fifty percent of our population have I.Q.'s below 100; half the population is below average; that's about what the word "average" means), no more than one percent of our population are in need of special services because they are mentally retarded.

Further, one-half of that one percent are either in the public schools' special programs for the mentally retarded or do not need any special services at the present time. Further still, given an adequate community-based program of alternatives for families, there should never be a need for more than one-tenth of one percent of the total general population to require residential placements because of some situation associated with



their retardation. It should be noted that such residential placements need never be in arrangements that include populations greater than eight. Our large, traditional institutions should be evacuated as speedily as possible. They neither help people, nor are they necessary—and they persist only because they serve magnificently that portion of our society who are responsible for the creation and maintenance of human slot fillers, wherever they are and for whomever they are.

For purposes of program planning and service delivery it is important to understand the difference between psychometric and administrative mental retardation, a concept that unfortunately has not reached most of our textbooks in the field. For example, on the one hand, we have psychometric mental retardation (essentially, I.Q. less than 75) to include approximately three percent of our total population. On the other hand, we find the incidence of known retardation to be approximately one percent. Further, prevalence among preschool and adult populations is somewhat less than one percent, while it is somewhat more than one percent among school-aged children. Stated another way, from group to group—depending on age, socio-economic status, community values, etc.—prevalences of mental retardation range from much less than one percent to much more than one percent. Nevertheless, the total population includes three percent who are psychometrically (but not necessarily mentally) retarded and no more than one percent who are mentally (i.e., administratively) retarded.

This problem, vis-à-vis the incidence and prevalence of a particular condition, exists across all so-called disability groups and, consequently, estimates of the various categorical handicaps vary from study to study, from culture to culture, and from time to time. What should be stated, as plainly as possible, is that disability means no more or less than being placed in a special class, a special program, or a special setting as a consequence of that disability—or, not being placed as a consequence of that disability. That is, the most relevant definition of a disability must include reference to the fact that it is essentially administratively determined.

Developing incidence estimates, predictions of program needs, and cost benefit analyses are extraordinarily hazardous when dealing with these diverse populations. For example, in one state attempts are made to integrate so-called educable mentally retarded children in regular grades. In another state such youngsters are in regular grades and are not called mentally retarded or thought of as such. In yet another state every effort

is made to place as many children as possible with I.Q.'s less than 75 in special classes for the mentally retarded. In Connecticut, for example, many blind children attend public schools, most in regular classes. In a contiguous state, Massachusetts, possibly because of the presence of a venerable and heavily endowed private school, most blind children do not attend the public schools. In some cities in New York State, deaf children attend public schools. In other cities, deaf children must attend residential schools if they are to be educated, since, unfortunately, there are no classes or programs for the deaf in the public schools of those areas.

Therefore, estimating the incidence and prevalence of a disability is, at best, difficult and always error-ridden, even after arduous epidemiologic study. In one community, there may be as many as thirty or forty percent of the public school population who are psychometrically retarded; in another community, within the same city or region, psychometric retardation may be as low as one-half of one percent of a school population. Similarly, estimating the incidence of behavioral disturbances is very difficult. Surprisingly, even estimates of such apparently objective disabilities as blindness, deafness, and physical handicap do not provide the clear-cut data some might expect (The Fleischmann Report, on the Quality, Cost and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education in New York State, 1972).

After all is counted and analyzed, the prepotent lesson one learns is that there is a difference—a political, pragmatic, legal, and scientific difference—yet a hardly understood difference, between psychometric and administrative mental retardation, or, as another example, between audiogrammatic and administrative deafness. In the last analysis there is an irony which suggests that not until we appreciate this special difference between objective and administrative disability will we begin to understand that, basically, there is never a difference between people. That is, we will eventually understand that, as human beings, people are just people, and our shared heritage overwhelms a veneer of potentially enriching variability which, although thin, causes us too much grief as one excludes the other from his "turf" and consciousness.

#### E. A Summary

Since the early 1950's, when I began study of public school special education programs, there have been a great many attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of those programs. Although state schools, being more se-



cluded and more segregated, have been subjected to fewer formal evaluations in contrast with the numerous so-called special class efficacy studies, these too are now regularly examined.

Research on the effectiveness of special classes for so-called handicapped children, as mentioned earlier in this paper, has now grown to impressively large and depressingly hollow proportions. Again, as mentioned earlier, the conclusion is that there is little research to encourage the expansion of special classes as we now know them. From Dorothea Dix to Kraepelin, to the more recent observations of Wolfensberger, Klaber, Menolascino, Dybwad, and others, there is consistent conformation that, by its very nature, the state institution is infinitely less able to offer its residents humane care and completely incompetent to provide them with opportunities to contribute to society and live dignified and purposeful lives.

Yet, in total disregard of the few, but powerful, reports of institutional life and the scientifically questionable, but numerous, reports of special class life, we continue to build more and more institutions and pass more and more mandatory, rather than permissive, special class (not education) laws. This is in spite of the well known fact that we have yet to demonstrate either the efficacy or moral rectitude in continuing, much less encouraging, these segregated programs. To return to an earlier theme, such proliferation in the face of no evidence is but another illustration of the Monolithic influence. There is an urge that we seem to have to segregate while we engage ourselves in a constant flirtation between order and disaster, humanism and barbarism, love and hate. No wonder, some claim the world has gone mad, and sad, and bad. Little wonder that we have lost sight of the distinction between human privileges and human rights.

### V. *The Promise*

Why this discrepancy between what we know and what we do? Why backwards? Why have we moved so grudgingly from Dorothea Dix to the 20th Century? Why do we in the United States know more about and do less for disabled people than other western cultures? Are we, in fact, a nation devoted to our young and our vulnerable? We speak as if we are; our proclamations are frequent and strident. Moreover, we enact child labor laws and public education laws; we support treatment services for handicapped children. However, in spite of what some may consider our best efforts, there is more violence, more frustration, there are more alienated youth, more sick children in our culture than ever before.

Consequently, we must think seriously about the notion that we are not a "child-centered society," that we use this term in an unexamined way. On the evidence of too many reports, I am forced to consider the possibility that we never had a "child-centered" society. We are for children to the degree that children are for us; but first, and sometimes only, in this "adult-centered" society each man is for himself. At least one would be hard put to find sufficient evidence to reject this characterization of us—not of "them" or even of "you," but of "us." *I must change.*

While I wait for a better world, I reflect on those days of our youth and callowness when we thought that if people only would "understand," mental retardation would be prevented. But while I wait, I must change. While I wait for the millennium, I painfully record our human frailties, our inabilities to face life for whatever it is and for whatever it has to offer, and I must, in spite of its vicissitudes and the unfairness of it all, respect living as the one thing we have in common. For better or worse, it's all we have to stay alive. And if your retarded child is all you have, that child is part of the reality of your life. That human being is part of the enrichment of your life. Without her, your life would be less full, and you would have fewer opportunities to learn, and contribute, and love. She owns part of your world, as you must own part of hers.

And I, too, own a part of my family, a part of the university, a part of society, a part of the total "action." I, too, must think and do, not only for others, but for myself. But, what I must do most urgently is change. For the world to change, I must change. If I blame an evil world, a stupid system, ineffective leaders, or man's obvious imperfections, I may be right. But if it means that I do not have to change, I contribute to the evil. Before we can change humanity, we must change ourselves. Before I attempt to solve the human puzzle, I must solve the riddle "I." I must think about my unfolding as the beginning of understanding civilization's evolution.

What is the promise for people? What are we, and what must we become? We have seen the views of Monoliths from behind windows to be nothing and we are not pleased. Therefore, we wonder what our people have become, what we have become—and what we must now do. The answer is as plain as it is complicated, clear as it is opaque. We must create a union of consumers, professionals, attendants, students, their professors, great people, ordinary people—each concerned with Monoliths, with departments of mental health and education, with the inner city, with institutions and public schools, with the legislature, and united on behalf of all who have asked or wondered what we have become. We must join together on behalf of the inmates, the state school and hospital residents,



the ghetto children, and—finally—on behalf of each of us living through these difficult times.

We must seek a society where leaders will not merely lead but will be led by greater visions and authorities than they possess—and a society where the people will be led because they are independent. We must envision a society that will be free of dehumanizing and debilitating state-sponsored domiciles, a society that will evacuate human beings from any facility that abuses or enslaves. We must create a society that has compassion for all those who are saddened, yet comprehends the difference between him who regrets his own lost years and him who worries for his brothers. We must think about a man who weeps not for whom the world may suspect he weeps, but for his zealousness and for himself. And, possibly today, each of us is that man.

We must create an organization that earlier reformers, were they here today, would join. We must unite, not about specific task orientations but about powerful ideologies, not about special means but about a consensus of humanistic ends, not about silly slogans thoughtlessly chanted but about the infinite perspectives of a complex dilemma. We must describe and understand the subtle as well as the flagrant, ennui as well as flailing arms and diffuse excrement, and pandemonium as an extension of the best-managed “model” institution. We must act as if Itard, Howe, Dorothea Dix, Helen Keller, and Emil Kraepelin are our judges. We must convince others—and ourselves—that the state does not own a man, that the state controls but may not buy or sell a human being, that *I* may destroy *myself* but the state has no right to my self or my corpse—nor to my feelings, nor mind, nor spirit, that freedom is more important than life itself. We must illuminate the irony of a state that is permitted, by law, to take or reduce my life while I—who should be the owner—may not, under penalty of fine or imprisonment, take my own life or cause myself bodily harm. The state may, with (or sometimes without) provocation, kill me, institutionalize me, seclude me, shock me, drug me, dirty me, animalize me. But I, who should be the owner, may not kill myself, scandalize myself, drug myself, dirty myself, or dehumanize myself.

The state—as it substitutes pills for straight jackets and therapeutic isolation for solitary cells—does not change in the truly important dimensions, as it demands that each of us bend and twist, as we scrape low to say grace and pay homage to the state. Long live the state and to hell with man—even, exquisite irony, to hell with each man who represents the state. Man once manufactured the state and now the state manufactures man; the state is now the apotheosis of man! Possibly Hemingway thought

of the state when he remarked, “All things truly wicked start from innocence.”

Do not some informed men share these concerns? Certainly. There have been many who tried to reshape our styles of living and thinking. There are some among us who understand the difference between feeding and eating, and between eating and dining. But all their concerns seem to have led to so meager accomplishment, to so trivial common good! And so our involvement, and a small hope, and these words. For, in spite of some claims that it is “darkest before the dawn,” one may yet encounter terror at high noon, and one may thus conclude that man’s days can be as black as his nights.

Therefore, we must band together, as each makes his special commitment to change. We must become a new people, no longer underestimating the potentials we have for changing, no longer pessimistic concerning the conditions of change and, thus, no longer fulfilling the prophecy of no-change, finally convinced that development is a function of opportunity and training. We must believe that our inability to have better stipulated the conditions of learning is less a defect of the educability hypothesis than of our practices. Finally, for me to change and, thus, for the world to change, I must believe in a design of things, and that the design for all of us holds nothing but good. I must become a new man. But *how?* the final question. And after the question, not an answer but a hypothetical dialogue, a speculation; and then there remains only you and only me. But, possibly at least today, we are brothers.

“What is Man?”

“One who knows he exists.”

“That’s Descartes.”

“Descartes is Man.”

“Can Man endure?”

“First, he must think, so he can be.”

“Is that enough?”

“No, to endure, Man must feel.”

“How can he improve?”

“He must invent.”

“What is his most important invention?”

“Ideas.”



"But, Man has so few ideas."  
 "Because he is violated."  
 "Then, how should Man meet violence?"  
 "With other than violence."

"How will I know what *I* am?"  
 "When you know what you are not."  
 "And, then will I know?"  
 "Yes, if you don't fool yourself."

"How will I know of the Cosmos?"  
 "When you cease the struggle to understand."  
 "How can I know without understanding?"  
 "That is the only way to know of the Cosmos."

"What must I resist?"  
 "What everyone else seems to do."  
 "What, then, would I learn?"  
 "What no one else knows."

"When everything is gone, what is left?"  
 "You."  
 "Then, what do I have?"  
 "Everything, or nothing."

"But, there is an interconnection."  
 "Are you asking if a man is alone?"  
 "No, I am saying he is not."  
 "Then, you are wrong."

"A person is not unrelated!"  
 "But he is unique."  
 "He is not an island!"  
 "But he is even less a carbon."

"I sense an unfriendliness."  
 "No, it is independence you feel."  
 "Whose?"  
 "Yours, if you seize it."

"But, there are paradoxes and contradictions."  
 "Where aren't there?"  
 "Why make them manifest?"  
 "So we may deal with them."

"Independence risks everything."  
 "Dependence nothing, for there is nothing."  
 "Too many problems."  
 "And many solutions."

"How do I begin?"  
 "Analyze things."  
 "To learn about them?"  
 "To learn about yourself."

"What should I look for?"  
 "Your vulnerability."  
 "Which is?"  
 "What you will try to overlook."

"How will I know when my path is honest?"  
 "When you walk alone."  
 "What is the danger then?"  
 "That others may follow you."

"Who will our leaders be?"  
 "Those who have learned to listen."  
 "Then, how will they lead?"  
 "By following their people."

"What will it require?"  
 "Independence."  
 "The leaders'?"  
 "And the peoples'."

"Who will follow this kind of leader?"  
 "Those who will be free not to."  
 "Who will obey?"  
 "Those who are independent."



"Then what is the world?"  
 "Each person."  
 "All people together?"  
 "No, each one counted separately."

"Where is the world going?"  
 "Look at its past."  
 "What will we learn from it?"  
 "That we learn nothing from it."

"Don't we learn from history?"  
 "Only that we have not learned from history."  
 "Then, we are doomed to relive it again and again."  
 "Or, to begin to learn from history."

"How, then, have we planned?"  
 "Poorly."  
 "One hears that there is virtue in not planning."  
 "False virtue, for any road will take you to your goal."

"You are too negative about the past."  
 "Or too optimistic for our future."  
 "But you find so little that has been good."  
 "Because I feel it can become better."

"When will it?"  
 "When the enslaved are freed."  
 "Why?"  
 "So I will be free."

"Whom do you mean?"  
 "Anyone who does not harm, yet remains enchained."  
 "Possibly for his protection?"  
 "Possibly merely to enslave him."

"Who are some examples?"  
 "All those whom we separate without cause."  
 "Name some."  
 "All those whom we have segregated thoughtlessly."

"You would set them free?"  
 "So we can be free."  
 "Where will they go?"  
 "Where we go."

"But they will need help."  
 "Who doesn't?"  
 "But you said each man is alone."  
 "And you said he isn't."

"Then, what is the riddle?"  
 "First, let's find the answer."  
 "Which is?"  
 "Only a free person can be responsible for other free people."

"And the riddle?"  
 "Why does being free cause one to give up freedom,  
 To insure his freedom,  
 And, enlarge his respect for freedom?"  
 "Eureka!"

"Those who are enslaved cannot contribute to others."  
 "And, no one is completely free until all who  
 should be are free."  
 "That's why leaders must follow their people."  
 "And the people must be free to choose leaders."

"And, to be free, a man must have self-respect,  
 Which requires relationships with others,  
 That reinforce his freedom and dependence,  
 Which again answers the riddle."

"Therefore, you call for a New Man."  
 "Is there another way?"  
 "From where will he arise?"  
 "Obviously, from the ranks of the enslaved."



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