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CAN SOCIETY BE REFRAMED?

WE learned from some TV-watching friends that the Charles Kuralt of On *the Road With Charles Kuralt* is a popular TV reporter and performer whom everybody likes. From reading in his book one can see why. He makes good selections for shows or stories and in his book he tells about a man, Jethro Mann, that spends his private life, what there is of it, fixing bikes for the children of his town, Belmont, North Carolina, to ride. It hurt him, Kuralt says, to grow up without bikes. "See, *he* grew up without a bike." So he started a "lending library" of bicycles. He now has thirty-five of them, all of which he fixed up himself. He gets broken-up bicycles any way he can. His garage is filled with wrecked bikes, and outside is a pile of thrown-away bikes waiting for repair. Kuralt says: "Jethro Mann repairs the bikes for little kids, but this may be the most important part: he teaches little kids to repair the bikes for littler kids."

Kuralt noticed that the kids are careful to check out the bikes they borrow, and mentioned it. Mann said:

> Yes. We have a little system here. It's the honor system. If they fail to bring it back in this afternoon, tomorrow they don't get to ride but a little while. . . . So they're pretty nice about bringing them back. And we try to use this as a learning situation for them, teach them how to be responsible for something, teach them that if they'll take care of other people's things they can't help but take care of their own. It works out pretty good.

Every evening, about suppertime, the bicycles come back and are signed in by the children. Jethro Mann, Kuralt tells us, has a full-time job working for the state. Asked if what he was doing with the bicycles didn't cost him time and money, he replied:

> Yes, a good bit of it. But I don't have many vices, so this is about my only vice (laughs). I enjoy spending this that I would be spending on other things in a way that'll be helpful to somebody.

After dinner he sometimes works on the bikes until one or two o'clock in the morning. He says:

> I look at it this way. I have had a pretty good life-myself and I'm not apt to have very much more. But whatever I do have, I hope it will contribute to somebody else's welfare. And this is what I try to do.

Unfortunately, you don't find many people like Jethro Mann, but telling about those you do find is probably the best way to create more of them. So we are grateful to Charles Kuralt for doing more than his share. Best of all, his stories are believable and persuasive. He has found several other people like the "bicycle man" and he tells about them in the section of his book titled "Unlikely Heroes."

While reading these stories we received in the mail from a reader a copy of the Fall 1986 *Newsletter* of the Noetic Sciences, largely devoted to the same subject. The lead article, "Altruism: Self and Other," by Thomas J. Hurley III, Barbara McNeill and Willis Harman, is an abstract discussion of the qualities found in Jethro Mann and much easier to understand for one who has read about him. The writers begin by recalling that some forty years ago, a Harvard scholar, Pitirim Sorokin, did some research defining "creative altruism" as "the innate capacity for unselfish service to others motivated by love." Not much attention was then paid to his work and the people at the Institute of Noetic Sciences decided to re, vive his project. "How," they asked, "can our most socially constructive potential—our capacity for love, cooperation, service—be more fully developed or awakened?" They went on:

> Determined to learn more about creative altruism as a socially constructive character trait, Sorokin studied the life experiences of a number of "saints and good neighbors," attempting to identify patterns in the ways altruism developed and was expressed throughout the lifetimes of these individuals. . . .

Sorokin also perceived a link between the future wellbeing of society and what we might call "higher level functioning" in the individual. His analysis of social and cultural dynamics, published in four volumes between 1937 and 1941, had led him to believe that Western civilization was in the midst of a profound transformation in its underlying values and beliefs. This conclusion was based on studying the content and structure of a wide range of cultural and social indicators, noting the cyclic rise and fall of two value systems over thousands of years of history. Materialist values, on the ascendent for several centuries, were no longer providing people with a satisfying sense of meaning and purpose.

For Western civilization to survive, Sorokin concluded, a set of newly-emerging transcendent values had to prevail. Otherwise the disruption occasioned by the progressive loss of meaning would be so severe that, given the tools of destruction now available, our civilization would almost certainly be annihilated. . . . creative altruism, as we are defining it, is the unvarying ability to respond to a situation with unselfish love, and it is deeply rooted in the person's innermost sense of identity. It is this latter character trait which may be closely associated with the development of creativity, intuition and aesthetic sense.

The old assumption, associated with the mechanistic outlook, that altruism is merely "a subtle form of selfishness," is now waning in influence. The writers cite *How Can I Help?* by Ram Dass and Paul Gorman to show that altruism is a natural human quality, saying, "The suffering of others spontaneously releases our desire to help out."

Ram Dass and Gorman remind us that *this kind of altruism is not a rarefied or precious experience reserved for creative geniuses of goodness; the potential for it resides in us all. Its expression is often very ordinary.* It happens whenever we meet someone in need and feel that spontaneous urge to help. It is almost as if something within us moves outward, seeking to connect with another person and to provide solace, comfort, or aid. This movement, this action, affirms our kinship at a level that transcends our individual, social, or cultural differences. . . .

These developments reflect growing sentiment that the balance in psychology and in society has tilted too far in the direction of egoism, and some redressing of the balance is now called for. Human experience and actions clearly have both egoistic or individualistic and social or trans-individualistic aspects. In considering how the latter might be amplified, one current approach is to reconsider the way in which we conceive of "self" and "other."

The writers quote from Abraham Maslow's *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences:*

The empirical fact is that self-actualizing people, our best experiencers, are also our most compassionate, most effective fighters against injustice, inequality, slavery, cruelty, exploitation. . . . [It] becomes clearer and clearer that the best "helpers" are the most fully human persons. . . . the best way to become a better "helper" is to become a better person.

Sorokin, the writers say, "recognized the innate capacity for creative altruism or unselfish love as being at the core of the world's great spiritual traditions and ethical systems."

He concluded that the full realization of supreme love or creative altruism requires participation of the "supraconscious" mind—the source of our creative, intuitive, aesthetic, mystically knowing faculties. . . .

Widely varying in forms and details, the essential part of this procedure consists in a progressively growing awareness by the maturing altruists that their true self is neither their body, nor their unconscious, subconscious, or preconscious energy, nor their bioconscious or socioconscious egos with all their trappings, but rather the supraconscious, whatever name and properties they give to it.

The writers here return to Maslow, saying:

Maslow eventually came to place this kind of self-transcendence at the pinnacle of self-development, above self-actualization. It involves not just commitment to a higher purpose, which is characteristic of self-actualizers and peak performers, but *selfless service.* The key to it is a form of contemplative or unitive knowledge that complements sensory-based, empirical knowing and rational, ideational knowledge. Transcending the ordinary dualities of experience, it involves an intuitive identification with the supraconscious ground of being.

How to foster this experience, which is the ultimate dissolution of the distinction between the self and other, in ways that stimulate creative being and action, may be one of the most important questions of our time.

Finally, they quote Sorokin, who says in his *The Ways and Power of Love:*

> The supraconscious is the fountainhead of creativity in all fields of culture. . . . Anything that can increase its circulation in the present and future human universe, anything that augments the human share of its inexhaustible creative grace can inestimably promote the task of vital, mental, moral, and social progress of the human race.

In their concluding section the writers take note of a fact that *is* commonly left out or ignored in such discussions. It is that identification with the supraconscious "implies that a strong ego has first developed," and they add: "The puzzle for modern society is thus how to achieve individuation and *also* altruism." Finally, they point out that "the issue remains of how to deal with the behind-the-scenes source of our intuition, our creativity, our aesthetic and spiritual sensibilities." These qualities are all closely related and seem a natural part of the altruistic human being. The last question the writers ask is: "How would society have to be reframed in order for creative altruism to be reinforced by the social environment?"

But what, in this case, does "reframing" mean? Is it, for example, a synonym of "reorganization"? In no case that we know of has the altruistic spirit been the result of organization. This spirit is born of an inner human quality, not of any influence from without, although contact with someone or people in need may have made the occasion for altruistic action. People seem to be born with the quality, which then finds expression during the course of a life.

Yet the power of example does have an influence. Reading a simple story like that of the bicycle man may arouse altruistic feelings in the reader. Reading the biographies of altruistic individuals may have a similar effect. So also reading Emerson and Thoreau, Lincoln, and Arthur Morgan sometimes lights a fire of inspiration in the reader.

Early in his book, *The Long Road,* Morgan gives attention to business practices, with which he was intimately familiar:

> Throughout American industry there are men in high places who have exploited the faithful honest work of real builders, and have advanced themselves by shrewdness in creating the appearance of rapid accomplishment. There are prominent industrialists in America today who believe that, because of such tendencies to self-seeking on the part of men in responsible positions, the very structure of big business may fail. I know that one of the most difficult phases of carrying through public projects is to keep at bay demagogues and certain impetuous elements while trying to lay the basis for efficient progress. Public suspicion and impatience may not give time for honest and thorough-going preparation.
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> Neither can any central executive or legislative body effectively follow all the special work of a great public organization. . . . In a simple society a relatively few checks and balances and restrictions may be enough to prevent gross abuses. In the extremely complex social and economic order which has emerged in the modern world, however, the kinds of inefficiency and of anti-social action that are possible, and which both in public and in private affairs may have the temporary appearance of success, are extremely varied; and laws, regulations, and supervision are increasingly difficult to apply. The checking of anti-social action by laws and surveillance becomes too involved for human management, and the whole process begins to bog down. I saw that occur twenty-five years ago [Morgan was writing in the 1930s] on a great railroad system, when the Missouri Pacific was under unfortunate control. The morale was bad, and the management tried to control by surveillance rather than by mutual confidence. Under such conditions the morale of the system cracks to the very bottom, because of lack of character at the top. . . .
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> During the 1920s we witnessed a period when the general public relied implicitly upon the character of those who had our financial affairs in their control. Though the Federal Trade Commission was gathering evidence of the excesses of utility companies and there remained some wholesome fear of government discipline, government on the whole was friendly to big business. The slogan "Do not disturb prosperity', was persuasive, and big business largely had its own way, disciplined chiefly by the character of its leaders. It was trusted by the American people. The wild orgy of speculation and of exploitation which characterized

> the later 1920s, and which ended with the great collapse, was a measure of the inability of American business to measure up to the freedom and confidence reposed in it. The prevailing personal incentives and motives of men as revealed in business do not justify the policy of leaving business free to manage itself in its own way without social or governmental control.
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> Yet our alternative protection, the driving force of vigilant watchfulness, must always be inadequate as a sole reliance before such widespread and varied complexities as make up our present life, both public and private. The time has come when enlightened selfishness fails, when we can no longer exercise enough shrewdness to protect ourselves from the maze of interests, powers, influences, propaganda, and other forces which surround us. Another kind of foundation, very different from self-interest, must be provided if modern society is to survive and advance.

Morgan was an engineer and he goes to engineering for an analogy.

> In comparing the development of a social order to the building of a bridge, we may liken personal character to the quality of steel of which a bridge is made. We may desire to create a bridge of greater span than ever has been built. Yet if the only steel available is of very low tensile strength and of uneven and uncertain quality, no amount of fine design and no abundance of finance can overcome that limitation. By the time we have made the steel members thick enough to overcome the weakness of the material, so much steel has been added that the bridge will break down of its own weight. . . . Personal character in a social order is like the quality of the metal used in bridge-building. If personal character is on a low level, then there comes a time when no refinement of social planning and no expenditure of public wealth, however great, will create a good social order.

We have been quoting from the first chapter of Morgan's *The Long Road.* Toward the end of the chapter he says:

> For perhaps the next half century or more the burden of our attention and of our loyalties, and the full drive of our aspirations, should be given to bringing about a revolution in the personal character of the American people. . . . the great need of the coming years . . . is the building of great character, the defining and clarifying of purposes and motives, the development of integrity and open-dealing, the increase of self-discipline, the tempering of body and spirit to endure hardship, the growth of courage, the practice of tolerance, the habit of acting for the general good, and the growth of human understanding and of neighborly affection and regard.

This is the meaning that Morgan would give to the "reframing" of society. "If," as he put it, "the energy and drive of public-spirited Americans takes the direction of building a strong foundation of character for our national life, the greatest possible advance will be made toward a better social order." Thereafter he devotes his whole book (a small one) to the means by which character may be developed. He presents a wide variety of material to think about but offers no "master plan" for the reason that the development of character does not require such a plan and would surely fail were one provided. He is arguing for the fuller growth of the moral qualities of human beings. He says in one place:

> The personal attitudes and qualities of conduct I have suggested as necessary to lay the foundation of a good social order do not represent simply mild ameliorations of existing defects, but rather such a radical advance in motives and disciplines as would result in a strikingly different social temper. Because of the greatly increasing complexity of our modern life, growing out of modern technology, stresses are being put upon our social structure that are extreme, and the whole situation demands, as I say, not simply amelioration, but something more in the nature of revolution of personal and social outlook.

Morgan emphasizes that "for a long time to come a few men will be leaders and many men followers." It is especially desirable, then, for natural leaders to recognize the importance of developing character, and to begin by setting an example themselves. He asks: "Shall it be as friends and trustees of their special abilities in the service of the common good, or by using their exceptional ability to advance their personal interests?" He concludes one of his early chapters:

> To make the transition from the social order we are in to a better one, requires that many men shall work at laying the foundations for that other order at great cost to themselves. To do this is evidence of character.

There is no other way to accomplish the reframing of society.

REVIEW
MORE THAN BIRDS

READING *On Watching Birds,* by Lawrence Kilham, is full of surprises. You start out, expecting it to be all about birds, but find it is about very nearly everything of interest that you come across outdoors. It is also about the author, who has spent much of his life researching viruses for the National Institutes of Health, looking at birds and other small animals only in his spare time. He began his private career of an observer back in the 1950s when he was living in Bethesda (convenient to his job). As he puts it:

> Whenever I took a walk or went anywhere, I began observing with the first birds I met. Even if I encountered no more than a few chickadees, I followed them to see how much I could learn before they became lost to view. *Watch everything,* I said to myself. . . . No matter how many experts may have reported on how Blue Jays and chickadees move through the woods, I decided, I must see and discover everything for myself. There is, I quickly found, magic in seeing for oneself. At the same time I started reading up on each bird that I had observed at any length. Observing makes reading mean more, and reading, when it generates ideas, makes you a better observer. . . .
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> Our yard in Bethesda was not large, but it had some good trees and at times provided opportunities for behavior watching. Blue Jays had come to a sand pile in the yard in the fall and winter for several years, but it was not until after snowstorms in February and March that I observed their special attraction to the sand. Four inches of snow covered the pile one February day and the jays hopped about as if searching until one of them scooped a hole by a rock. The others then came to feed. There was no evidence that they were feeding on anything but sand. Starlings and other birds coming to our feeders showed no interest in the sand pile, and the jays did not pick up any objects of appreciable size. On March 7, I placed some washed sand on a bare log on the sand pile. A pair of jays came down right away. One picked up one hundred or more grains or small aggregates. Two other jays then took turns on the log, each taking fifteen to twenty billfulls, tipping their heads sideways to do so. In succeeding days the jays were often punctual in coming at 6:35-6:40 A.M. It seemed from these observations that Blue Jays eat sand regularly in winter, presumably to aid in the digestion of grain, acorns, or other hard winter fare.
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> There is fun in learning for yourself what birds live on, and a yard, especially in winter, can be a place to learn and experiment. Years later, when feeding about seventy-five crows through the winter on a neighbor's farm in New Hampshire, I noted that they flew over snow-covered fields every morning to feed on sand by a roadside. As with the jays, I could find nothing in books about their need for sand in winter.

In 1954 he was transferred to work at the Virus Research Institute in Entebbe, Uganda, where he had a house with a large garden. There he encountered two large black-and-white birds called Black and White Casqued Hornbills. The two birds were male and female and he watched their long courtship, and then saw the female wall herself in a nest hole in a large tree. There she remained for 119 days, then emerging with a well-grown young bird. During her internment she was fed by the male, who passed food through a slit in the wall. Kilham makes this comment:

> A lesson I learned from the hornbills was that I succeed best with opportunistic studies, topics that fit in with the country where I am living and the work I am doing. Hornbills came to our garden daily, so I could watch foraging and other behavior as well as roosting without going out of my way, and the nearby botanical garden, being largely open, made an ideal place for watching the nest. . . .
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> I got a feeling for Africa that was very satisfying by studying one bird at length, but I was not sedentary there. Jane, the children, and I took safaris to Kenya, Tanzania, and the Congo in our Ford Ranchwagon. . . The hornbills were the longest study I had made on bird behavior up to that time. In addition to the Entebbe pair, I studied nests in the Mpanga Forest, near Entebbe, on weekends, following as many aspects of their lives as I could to round out my African studies.

Kilham was then transferred to the Rocky Mountain Laboratory in Montana, where he came into contact with pikes—"short-eared, short-legged relations of rabbits." They are territorial creatures and were always in the same places weekend after weekend.

It turned out that no one had studied territories in pikes before, and my observations led to a number of studies by others. Even if all the facts had been known before I started, however, I would have watched the pikes anyway. . . .

Readers may wonder why, in a book on watching bird behavior, I occasionally give an account of watching some mammal. I feel that it does not pay to be too narrowly oriented. Some diurnal mammals as the pikes illustrate, can be watched in the same manner as birds, and if, in a particular locality, you find a good opportunity to study some mammal and nothing particularly favorable with birds, why not be guided by chance? Audubon studied and painted both mammals and birds, and anyone interested in conservation should consider all living things.

How does Kilham work?

As in other aspects of behavior-watching, an individualized pursuit, devotees will vary in methods, tactics, and the amount of equipment they like to use. There is no one way of observation. As Nietzsche said of philosophy, "This is my way. What is yours? As for the way, there is no such thing." I lean toward working with a minimum of equipment, for example, but I realize that others, more gadget-minded than I, will prefer to work with more. All one needs for watching is a pair of binoculars and a pen and paper for note-taking. To these I would add a folding chair that is easy to carry. One of the many advantages of a chair, whether one is young or old, is that it makes one sit still. The trouble with most men, said Pascal, is that they cannot sit still in a room alone. I would say that the trouble with many would-be behavior-watchers is related: they can't sit still out of doors. Being comfortable in a chair has a settling effect. It helps make one content to stay in one place and watch, especially during periods, which always occur, when nothing much happens.

One of Kilham's chapters, "Reading for Ideas and Inspiration," is likely to have in it material quite unbelievable for some readers. Lovers of birds develop relations with these creatures that ordinary people can hardly imagine. Kilham quotes from several writers along these lines and relates his own adventures with pine siskins, a kind of finch. He says:

Pine siskins are extraordinarily tame naturally. Many were coming into our yard in Bethesda in April 1953. Having read that they would come into a bedroom, I put peanut hearts on the outside and inside of our window-sill. It did not take the siskins long to find them. I threw the window open at night and pulled down a Venetian blind. With the blind down, I thought, the siskins won't come until we are awake. No such luck. They came early and made so much noise coming through the slats of the blind and flitting about the room that they woke us up. My experiment was a success and could have developed further except that Jane had three small children to look after, and so the time was not propitious.

So, instead, he quotes the following about siskins from E.S. Davis:

I placed a small box of seeds on the window-sill near the head of my bed and over it a glass cover. The next morning one of the birds came and looked through the cover at the food, but, of course, was unable to reach it. After hopping around it and trying in vain to get the food, he came to my pillow and pulled my hair to awaken me. Then he flew to the window and tried to get the seeds again. Failing, he returned to me, pulled my hair and pinched my ear, then went again to the glass-covered box. Three times he did the same, and then I "awoke" and reached for the box. Immediately he scuttled out on my arm and waited until I removed the cover, when he hopped into the box and enjoyed a well-earned breakfast. And that was no accident, for I had the pleasure of seeing the same performance staged many times afterward.

Davis, Kilham says, had empathy.

He was obviously sensitive to what was going on in the minds of his visitors. Anyone could have a wonderful time playing around with siskins as Davis did. When I think of all the tortured, complicated, and expensive experiments on animal intelligence that have been performed in laboratories, mostly with dubious results, I reflect on how much easier, simpler, and seemingly more meaningful were Davis' experiments with his free-living birds.

Readers will have no difficulty in agreeing that this is a fascinating book. The publisher is Chelsea Green, the price $17.95

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This seems a good place to take note of two paperback handbooks, one on birds and one on Rocks and Minerals, both for identification

purposes. Both are done in color and have been through many editions and printings. The price *is* the same for both—$2.95.

The bird book is titled simply *Birds,* which shows 199 birds in full color. The authors are Herbert S. Zim and Ira N. Gabrielson. The publisher is the Western Publishing Co., Inc., Racine, Wisconsin. The entry for the Robin reads:

> This bird's average length (10 in.) is a standard to which other birds are compared. One of the most common native birds of the East (it is the largest of the thrushes)—a relationship seen in the spotted breasts of the young. Two or three broods are raised each year. Homesick colonists named the Robin after a European bird with a much redder breast.

Rocks and Minerals, by Herbert Zim and Paul R. Shaffer, provides the means for identification of minerals of every sort. The crystal forms are shown in color and the various techniques of identification are described. There is helpful advice on studying rock formations in the field.

COMMENTARY
WRITERS AND READERS

NOBODY likes being preached at, which is an explanation of why, in this week's lead article, the story of Jethro Mann, the "bicycle man," makes better reading than the work of Pitirim Sorokin. The bicycle man did what he did for children who had no bicycles of their own because he *enjoyed* doing it. Fixing old bikes and teaching children how to fix them was his pleasure in life and we enjoy reading about such people much more than about people who talk about unselfishness and altruism.

Yet it is a fact that people who *practice* altruism in their everyday lives have a better time than those who are only out for themselves. Those who were fortunate enough to meet Prof. Sorokin while he was alive know that he was not a preachy or moralizing man, but a delightful conversationalist, one whom it was a pleasure to spend a little time with.

What inspired him? What led him to take up unselfishness and altruism as a lifetime study? He was a learned man, a profound scholar, and in the long term, as the writers for the Institute for the Noetic Sciences show, was able to lay a foundation for a true sort of social science. Altruism may come to the front "whenever we meet someone in need and feel that spontaneous urge to help." Sorokin calls this the supraconscious, which he identifies as "anything that augments the human share of its inexhaustible creative grace" and promotes "the task of vital, mental, moral, and social progress of the human race." That sounds pretty impressive, but nowhere near as effective as saying, as Jethro Mann did: "I have a pretty good life myself and I'm not apt to have very much more. But whatever I do have, I hope it will contribute to somebody else's welfare. And this is what I try to do."

It seems fairly sure that anyone who reads about Jethro Mann in Kuralt's book is more likely to be moved to unselfish action than those who read Sorokin. Why? Because one can identify with the feelings Jethro Mann expresses.

That gives a key to the power of great novelists. Such writers are students of human nature and get across to their readers how the characters in their books *feel*. Above all, Dostoevsky had this power, and one or two others.

Ortega had another sort of genius—to help the reader feel the reality in his generalizations, and A. H. Maslow also had this power. And Arthur Morgan, who gave his life to the study of education, developed a power in his lean prose that has helped countless individuals.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves

SHARING AND CARING

THERE is a lot of good material in the Summer 1988 *Teachers College Record,* but best of all is the essay review by William Ayers of Joyce Antler's *Lucy Sprague Mitchell: The Making of a Modern Woman.*

Lucy Sprague Mitchell, Ayers says, "was first and fort most an outstanding teacher."

> She was also by any measure a remarkable person: the first dean of women at the University of California at Berkeley, a pioneering author of books for children, a powerful leader in the progressive education movement, the mother of four children, and the founder of the Bureau of Educational Experiments, later known as the Bank Street College of Education. In each of these enterprises she kept faith with the idealistic and activist teacher of her credo, for teaching was the project that most fully integrated her many skills and her multiple passions. Teaching was for her a way of being in the world.

The book, Ayers says, is also a solid history of Bank Street College, an institution that played a pioneering role in the progressive education movement in the early part of this century.

> Bank Street promoted diverse projects that challenged the traditional approach to education, became a clearinghouse for child-centered education, developed a respectable body of research on teaching and learning, and is perhaps best known for creating and advocating the "developmental-interactionist" perspective, a synthesis of progressive values and developmental theory in education that became the basis for producing generations of teachers trained in the "Bank Street approach."

She had a sad and difficult childhood, despite her family's great wealth. Her father was dictatorial, her mother ineffective and helpless. Her family was ravaged by tuberculosis, which killed two of her brothers and eventually both parents. Yet she grew up to regard the teacher "as an instrument of his or her own teaching," with teaching in large part "a dialogue of sharing and caring, something quite different from the mechanical application of technique." Ayers says:

> Lucy Sprague Mitchell made no distinction between teacher and researcher. To be effective, teachers needed to ask their own questions, to inquire into their own practice, to reflect on their own experiences. Teachers needed to develop an experimental attitude, a questioning spirit, and a confidence in their own reflected-upon experiences. Since teachers could be the primary and most powerful sources of knowledge about teaching and about children's lives and learning, she urged teachers to become sensitive to children through close observations of their behavior. . . . She was . . . constantly inquiring into the ways children learn. She wanted to see links, to make connections as she herself did, to experience learning as an integrated adventure that crossed established lines and disciplines. Personal experience was for her the starting point of learning, the place from which to extend arid broaden. . . .
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> Lucy Mitchell wrote that growth is not logical, it is "organic." This is worth remembering today when various developmental metaphors dominate our thinking about children. While important in some ways, it must be noted that the language of child development obscures even as it reveals, constrains even as it opens. Teachers need to look closely at the trembling reality of actual children in specific classrooms if the insights of child development are to be of any use whatever. Even more important, teachers need to look beyond the popular euphemisms that contain and control so much of our thinking about children. In our own work, how many of us see "cultural deprivation," "learning disabilities," and "gifted and talented" when we look at our children? How many of us see, particularly today, "national resources"? Teachers must see beyond the labels that aggregate and prescribe, simplify and distort. Teachers must struggle to find in each child a person of importance, and proceed with a degree of awe, respect, and wonder.

She sought a variety of experience.

> Shortly before her marriage to the economist Wesley Claire Mitchell, . . . she spent several months in New York City "asking to know its city-sorrows and its city-wisdom." She was pursuing a more personal "curriculum of experience," exploring career alternatives for women. . . . She apprenticed herself for brief periods to several prominent New York social reformers, among them Lillian Wald, founder

of the Henry Street Settlement, and the radical activist Florence Kelley. She was appalled by the dreadful conditions endured by immigrant families, and troubled by the glaring social injustices all around her. Inspired by the example of fighting women, she thought that work with children might be her way to alleviate immediate suffering while building for long-term social change. Like John Dewey and other progressives, she believed that an enlightened school process could change society as it improved the lives of children.

Later she decided that "working with children in the public schools was the work I really wanted to do."

She was part of a community that intended to make the world a better, more decent place in which people could live, and teaching was one natural arena of such work. Like the teachers born of the civil rights movement, there was a powerful sense among teachers of Lucy Mitchell's generation that teaching was more than a job or even a career: it was akin to a calling, a project, and an identity. Teaching involved a choice to link the private and the public spheres to stand with changing lives and changing worlds. Lucy Mitchell's optimism was at times naive. For example, we can see now that her faith that an enlightened school process could change society overlooked the fact that schools serve society in direct and powerful ways. School failure, for example, is not simply the result of ignorant teachers or backward administrators or even opportunistic politicians. In many ways specific school failure fits deliberately with particular social goals. Nevertheless, her optimism also energized her activism and saved her from despair and cynicism in the face of appalling social conditions. . . .

Teachers teach within contexts in a shared world that penetrates schools and classrooms. To be aware of the world and aware of what has yet to be achieved in terms of justice and freedom and love and beauty is to be a teacher who is also capable of being a attic, an activist, and a citizen. Lucy Sprague Mitchell had much of this in mind when she wrote: "A real teacher must know what children are like, what the physical and social world is like that both he and they live in, and must care enough about what children and the world are to become to have come through to convictions he is ready to work for."

Ayers relates something of Lucy Mitchell's career:

She taught for several years at the City and Country School, a school her own children attended and that was housed for many years in her own home. City and Country played an important role in developing the theory and practice of progressive education and Lucy Mitchell played an important role in the life of City and Country. The goal at City and Country was, as founder Caroline Pratt said, to develop "the habit of being motivated from within; of having purposes and being able to stick to them." The curriculum was child-centered: Children were considered active learners, constructors of their own education, workers and doers as opposed to sponges or blank slates. There was ample open and free space for children to be experimenters, asking their own questions and seeking their own answers. The materials were open-ended too: paint and clay and the wooden unit blocks pioneered by Pratt and now widely accepted in early childhood classrooms.

At City and Country—

Intellectual growth was not separated from emotional, physical, or social development, but rather teachers sought to create environments that nurtured and challenged the whole child. Frequent trips into the community allowed the children to learn from exploring the world around them. Eventually a jobs program was instituted in the upper grades, which meant that traditional school learning could take place incidentally in the context of a central enterprise of importance to the school community, like a school store and a school print shop. "Real work," work of apparent value to the community, became the watchword. The City and Country School, still on Thirteenth Street in Greenwich Village, is in its sixty-third year and continues to build on these powerful early ideas.

Lucy Mitchell worked in both private and public schools with the same end in mind: to develop an enlightened school practice that could change the lives and change the world. She found private schools useful as ground to work on her theory, to study it and improve it in practice, but she never lost sight of the fact that public schools are where the action is and must be.

FRONTIERS

Mind Is Not "Local"

LARRY DOSSEY, a medical practitioner in Dallas, Texas, writes in *Gandhi Marg* for February, 1988, on the violence implicit in Western medicine, showing how it is based on Newtonian physics and proposing a reform in the approach of doctors to their work along the lines of Gandhian nonviolence, which he finds in keeping with the new physics as well. Developing his argument, he shows that "as many as one-third of the admissions to critical care units (in the finest teaching hospitals) are due to *iatrogenic* disease." And he adds: "An iatrogenic disease is one caused by the physician." Such disease, he says, "may be so violent as to be fatal."

After presenting more evidence of the violence in the medical approach, he says:

> Today violence in medicine is so common that we have become numbed to it. We have come to accept the tragic as a matter of course. Sometimes we do not even recognize it when we see it and, when confronted with violence, we call it something else—as, for example, "side effects" or "complications."

Dr. Dossey asks:

> What support can we give for alternative views—views which might be based on nonviolence instead of violence? Today we can begin to make out the outlines of what in my opinion is a better way—a nonviolent way—in which to think about health and illness. It is a way which is consistent with our best science. Not only this. The new ways of thinking have the decided advantage of being in harmony with some of the most ancient spiritual messages the human race has produced, many of which originated in the soil of ancient India.

Dr. Dossey now tells of his own experience:

> My own search for an alternative approach in conceptualizing medical problems began about twenty years ago when I was in medical school. I had been introduced by a fellow medical student to the philosophy of the East through the writings of Alan Watts, the Englishman who, along with D.T. Suzuki, was so influential in bringing the teachings of the Orient to the West. This was for me a most sobering and challenging experience. I discovered in the tenets of Buddhism and Taoism a view of the world which for the first time rang true for me. I finished my formal training—medical school, internship, and residency in internal medicine—and then I ran headlong into another body of knowledge from which I had been shielded all my life. It was the information having to do with the modern worldview as it has been elaborated in modern physics, specifically in quantum mechanics and relativity theory. This new area of learning proved to be as invigorating and challenging as the spiritual views of the East. . . . All the facets of Newton's world . . . have been superseded by views which are more broadly applicable. . . .
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> I believe we should be cautious in placing too much reliance on modern physical theory as a guide in thinking about *medical* reality. The well-known physicist, John Archibald Wheeler, expressed this same attitude in speaking of religion. "Until we know the true constitution of the world, I think we have to depend much more on what wise men of the past have told us about the subject of religion than on anything science shows us."

Dossey then quotes from D. S. Kothari's Lecture, "Atom and Self," in which he said:

> It is of the utmost importance to grasp the fundamental distinction between "atom" and "self," or, what comes to the same thing, between brain and mind. Atom or brain belongs to the external, objective world of space-time and matter-energy. Self or mind belongs to the internal subjective world. This subjective (mental) world, is not describable in terms of space-time and matter-energy concepts. *Self or mind, therefore, lies outside natural science.*

Further along in his paper Dr. Dossey makes some practical applications of this liberated thinking about mind:

> We must acknowledge—in spite of the Cartesian legacy which maintains that such a thing is impossible—that the mind, however we may wish to define it or whatever it may prove to be, can act on matter. . . . Another characteristic of the new model in medicine must be an expanded view of the nature of the mind. If I were to attribute a single quality to the mind which it is necessary to explain what it can apparently do in medical situations, it would be the word *non-local.* This is simply a way of saying that the mind is not a thing. It cannot be regarded as something that is in a place—whether a place in *space* or a place in time.

> The idea prevalent in medicine today is that the mind is local. It is in a place, the brain. It is completely derived from the brain's chemistry and it will perish with the death of the brain. This idea, however, is in deep trouble even from a conservative, classical point of view.

He shows this by citing the work of Candace B. Pert, a discoverer of endorphins, which are found not only in the brain but in distant sites in the body as well. These receptor sites are found wherever blood flows.

> These chemicals contribute to our mental life, our moods and feelings. What, then, are we to say about the location of the mind? It seems that part of our "mental equipment" is clearly outside the brain. How can we say that the mind is located in the brain? As a result of this new information, we face the possibility that the entire body is alive with thought.
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> But mind which is confined to the body is still a local concept because it is mind confined to a point in space and time. In order to account for what the mind can do, we must manage to free the mind from, even, the body itself. . . .
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> Today we have reason in medicine to assert the importance of the view that mind is non-local—for instance, the study of cardiologist Randy Byrd at San Francisco General Hospital. . . . These results cannot be explained through a concept of mind that is local. Only by invoking a non-local view of the mind can we come to grips with such data. So non-local mind is not a "luxury idea" which we import into medicine as a philosophical nicety. It is a necessary step in explaining actual observations at the clinical level.
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> To say that the mind is non-local—that it is not confined to specific points in space or time—leads to the idea that the mind is *unbounded.* And if mind is unbounded, it is not separate from other minds. Thus non-local mind cannot fundamentally be divided into four and one-half billion minds, one for each body which exists on the Earth today. Ultimately they must be united. This is the idea, of course, of the One Mind—which Professor Kothari has called "the great Upanishadic formula"—"the different individual selves on the empirical plane are ONE and the Same on the transcendental plane: *tat tvam asi*."

In his conclusion, Dr. Dossey remarks that "perhaps the most violent act ever committed by humankind has been the amputation of man's spirit from his definition of himself. Unfortunately, science has played a major role in this hideous action."