

Dr. Abel and Miss Cole are of the opinion that very early training and learning is non-conceptual, but involves all the senses, coordination of minor and major muscle systems, and early social experiences, involving both verbal and non-verbal interchange. Though learning at this stage may be non-conceptual, it is perhaps more important to the development of the child, and hence of the adult, than later learning, because the openness of the child to later experience, including learning experience, is in large part determined by the richness and variety of stimuli he receives before he is five. Dr. Abel states that the Nursery School component frankly aims at changing Sioux culture. Before establishment of the Nursery School component, Dr. Abel feels, young Sioux children had a very limited range of experience, bounded by the rather drab confines of the backyard, a few farm animals, and cars. Sioux children are discouraged from developing verbal skills because they are expected to be quiet in the presence of adults, and do not acquire the habit of asking questions. Neither Dr. Abel nor Miss Cole ventures to predict exactly how Sioux culture will be altered (they frankly admit they are not experienced with Indians and do not claim to be experts on Sioux culture), but they feel that post-nursery-school children will do considerably better in school since the "wall of silence" described by many teachers of the Pine Ridge Reservation will probably never develop among them. Therefore they will be better equipped, both by education and by temperament, to find employment.

It is of course impossible to predict the outcome of this experiment, at least without administering a carefully designed schedule of personality tests to a large sample of Sioux children. However, a few issues should be mentioned tentatively.

Erik Erikson, whose study of the Oglala Sioux in *Childhood and Society* incorporates both psychological and anthropological data, questions the theory (advanced by MacGregor) that the personality of the Dakota is conditioned by repressive forces set in motion early in the child's life. Erikson writes:

"My conclusion would be, as before, that early childhood among the Dakota, within the limits of poverty and general listlessness, is a relatively rich and spontaneous existence which permits the school child to merge from the family with relative integration—i.e., with much trust, a little autonomy, and some initiative (1963:163)."

Erikson sees the silent shutting-out of teachers in late grade school as the result of a value crisis where the pupil must choose between his family, where generosity and mutual support are esteemed, and the school and other external influences which try to encourage individual achievement relative to one's peer group. Murray Wax, in a monograph entitled, *Formal Education in an American Indian Community* (1964), attacks the functional relevance of early cultural deprivation by pointing out that there is indeed a rich variety of stimuli for Sioux children, but that they are not perceived as such by most educators. Furthermore, Wax states, Sioux children are very verbal when among their peers, and have a penchant for elaborate stories and oratory.

Assuming the validity of the points made by Erikson and Wax, a more fundamental cause than poverty of verbal experience for the withdrawal reportedly characteristic of Sioux youths in the classroom would seem to be the incompatibility of the value systems of white educators and Sioux families. Early childhood experience has a strong bearing on values, and the Nursery School purveys values as well as sensory stimuli. The child learns something of respect for property, neatness and order, and "manners." He learns to talk to adults, to ask questions, to share his experiences with them, and to enjoy and seek their praise. All of these are either counter to or different in emphasis from the way he is expected to behave at home. Whether this is likely to provoke the crisis of contradictory standards that some observers feel is largely responsible for the passivity and emotional instability of Sioux youths, at an earlier age than usual, is conjectural.

The possibility that the Nursery Schools are aggravating a values crisis, rather than alleviating it, is of course only one among many, and the purpose in exploring the matter here is not to devalue the Nursery School idea, but to suggest that deliberate cross-cultural personality change has many pitfalls. The more powerful the techniques, and the more severe the psychological ills of the subject group, the greater the need for full consideration of the dynamics of those ills and the probable emergent patterns—before cures are administered.

(5) *Central Office Component.*—On 21 October 1965 the Pine Ridge CAP re-