sivity; movements becoming actions; urges giving place to wants and wants to choices; presentations becoming representations, remembered, recollected, recognized and gradually identified; occurrences coming to be recognized as events; "things" emerging from characteristics; "objects" perceived as signs and signs revealing alternative significances; sounds coming to be recognized as words with meanings determined by contexts; human procedures distinguished from natural processes—all the fluctuations which go on in the morning twilight of childhood, where there is nothing that, at a given moment, a clever child may be said exactly to know or not to know.

At home in the nursery or in the kindergarten, in the early years of childhood, attention and activity, when they begin to be self-moved, are, for the most part, ruled by inclination; the self is inclination. Things and occurrences (even when they have been expressly designed or arranged by adults) are gifts of fortune known only in terms of what can be made of them. Everything is an opportunity, recognized and explored for the immediate satisfaction it may be made to yield. Learning, here, is a by-product of play; what is learned is what may happen to be learned.

But education, properly speaking, begins when, upon these casual encounters provoked by the contingencies of moods, upon these fleeting wants and sudden enthusiasms tied to circumstances, there supervenes the deliberate initiation of a newcomer into a human inheritance of sentiments, beliefs, imaginings, understandings and activities. It begins when the transaction becomes "schooling" and when learning becomes learning by study, and not by chance, in conditions of direction and restraint. It begins with the appearance of a teacher with something to impart which is *not* immediately connected with the current wants or "interests" of the learner.

The idea "School" is, in the first place, that of a serious and

Michael Oakeshott. The Voice of Liberal Learning

orderly initiation into an intellectual, imaginative, moral and emotional inheritance; an initiation designed for children who are ready to embark upon it. Superimposed upon these chance encounters with fragments of understanding, these moments of unlooked-for enlightenment and those answers imperfectly understood because they are answers to unasked questions, there is a considered curriculum of learning to direct and contain the thoughts of the learner, to focus his attention and to provoke him to distinguish and to discriminate. "School" is the recognition that the first and most important step in education is to become aware that "learning" is not a "seamless robe," that possibilities are not limitless.

Secondly, it is an engagement to learn by study. This is a difficult undertaking; it calls for effort. Whereas playful occupations are broken off whenever they cease to provide immediate satisfactions, learning, here, is a task to be persevered with and what is learned has to be both understood and remembered. It is in this perseverance, this discipline of inclination, that the indispensable habits of attention, concentration, patience, exactness, courage and intellectual honesty are acquired, and the learner comes to recognize that difficulties are to be surmounted, not evaded. For example, in a profuse and complicated civilization such as our own, the inheritance of human understandings, modes of thinking, feeling and imagination is to be encountered, for the most part, in books or in human utterances. But learning to read or to listen is a slow and exacting engagement, having little or nothing to do with acquiring information. It is learning to follow, to understand and to rethink deliberate expressions of rational consciousness; it is learning to recognize fine shades of meaning without overbalancing into the lunacy of "decoding"; it is allowing another's thoughts to reenact themselves in one's own mind; it is learning in acts of constantly surprised attention to submit to, to understand and

to respond to what (in this response) becomes a part of our understanding of ourselves; and one may learn to read only by reading with care, and only from writings which stand well off from our immediate concerns: it is almost impossible to *learn* to read from contemporary writing.

The third component of the idea "School" is that of detachment from the immediate, local world of the learner, its current concerns and the directions it gives to his attention, for this (and not "leisure" or "play") is the proper meaning of the word *schole*. "School" is a place apart in which the heir may encounter his moral and intellectual inheritance, not in the terms in which it is being used in the current engagements and occupations of the world outside (where much of it is forgotten, neglected, obscured, vulgarized or abridged, and where it appears only in scraps and as investments in immediate enterprises) but as an estate, entire, unqualified and unencumbered. "School" is an emancipation achieved in a continuous redirection of attention. Here, the learner is animated, not by the inclinations he brings with him, but by intimations of excellence and aspirations he has never yet dreamed of; here he may encounter, not answers to the "loaded" questions of "life," but questions which have never before occurred to him; here he may acquire new "interests" and pursue them uncorrupted by the need for immediate results; here he may learn to seek satisfactions he had never yet imagined or wished for.

For example, an important part of this inheritance is composed of languages, and in particular of what is to be the native language of the newcomer. This he has already learned to speak in its contemporary idioms and as a means of communicating with others of his kind. But at "School" he learns something more which is also something different. There, studying a language is recognizing words as investments in thought and is learning to think more exactly; it is exploring its resources as

themselves articulations of understandings. For to know a language merely as a means of contemporary communication is to be like a man who has inherited a palace overflowing with expressions, intimations and echoes of human emotions, perceptions, aspirations and understandings, and furnished with images and emanations of human reflection, but in whose barbaric recognition his inheritance is merely that of "a roof over his head." In short, "School" is "monastic" in respect of being a place apart where excellences may be heard because the din of worldly laxities and partialities is silenced or abated.

Further, the idea "School" is that of a personal transaction between a "teacher" and a "learner." The only indispensable equipment of "School" is teachers: the current emphasis on apparatus of all sorts (not merely "teaching" apparatus) is almost wholly destructive of "School." A teacher is one in whom some part or aspect or passage of this inheritance is alive. He has something of which he is a master to impart (an ignorant teacher is a contradiction) and he has deliberated its worth and the manner in which he is to impart it to a learner whom he knows. He is himself the custodian of that "practice" in which an inheritance of human understanding survives and is perpetually renewed in being imparted to newcomers. To teach is to bring it about that, somehow, something of worth intended by a teacher is learned, understood and remembered by a learner. Thus, teaching is a variegated activity which may include hinting, suggesting, urging, coaxing, encouraging, guiding, pointing out, conversing, instructing, informing, narrating, lecturing, demonstrating, exercising, testing, examining, criticizing, correcting, tutoring, drilling and so on—everything, indeed, which does not belie the engagement to impart an understanding. And learning may be looking, listening, overhearing, reading, receiving suggestions, submitting to guidance, committing to memory, asking questions, discussing, experi-

Nietzsche, Daybreak

at need would we have of *faith*?' For
ıg made a more profound impression
has 'tempted' it more, than this most
ich to every true Roman is a sin against
est: – it was with this conclusion that
history of Christian dogma: but even
Germans of today, late Germans in
hing of truth, of the *possibility* of truth
ical principle with which in his day
it to conquer Europe – 'Contradiction
tradict themselves' –: for we are, even
ts.

he deepest or most fundamental to
can descend: faith in reason, with
nents must stand or fall, is, as faith, a
German pessimism still has one last
e again to set beside one another in
its *absurdum*? And if *this* book is
f morality, even to the point of going
uld it not for this very reason be a
ct exhibit a contradiction and is not
ıorality is withdrawn – but why? *Out*
e call that which informs it – and *us*?
expressions. But there is no doubt
us too, that we too still obey a stern
ast moral law which can make itself
we know how to *live*, in this if in
ɔnscience: namely, in that we do not
consider outlived and decayed, to
it called God, virtue, truth, justice,
t ourselves any bridges-of-lies to
e from the heart to everything that
s; hostile to every kind of faith and
stile to the half-and-halfness of all
ɔrship; hostile, too, towards the
science of the artists which would
ıere we no longer believe – for we
ıe whole of European *feminism* (or
d), which is for ever 'drawing us

upward' and precisely thereby for ever 'bringing us down': – it is only as men of *this* conscience that we still feel ourselves related to the German integrity and piety of millennia, even if as its most questionable and final descendants, we immoralists, we godless men of today, indeed in a certain sense as its heirs, as the executors of its innermost will – a pessimistic will, as aforesaid, which does not draw back from denying itself because it denies with *joy*! In us there is accomplished – supposing you want a formula – the *self-sublimation of morality*. – –

5

– Finally, however: why should we have to say what we are and what we want and do not want so loudly and with such fervour? Let us view it more coldly, more distantly, more prudently, from a greater height; let us say it, as it is fitting it should be said between ourselves, so secretly that no one hears it, that no one hears *us*! Above all let us say it *slowly* . . . This preface is late but not too late – what, after all, do five or six years matter? A book like this, a problem like this, is in no hurry; we both, I just as much as my book, are friends of *lento*. It is not for nothing that I have been a philologist, perhaps I am a philologist still, that is to say, a teacher of slow reading: – in the end I also write slowly. Nowadays it is not only my habit, it is also to my taste – a malicious taste, perhaps? – no longer to write anything which does not reduce to despair every sort of man who is 'in a hurry'. For philology is that venerable art which demands of its votaries one thing above all: to go aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow – it is a goldsmith's art and connoisseurship of the *word* which has nothing but delicate, cautious work to do and achieves nothing if it does not achieve it *lento*. But for precisely this reason it is more necessary than ever today, by precisely this means does it entice and enchant us the most, in the midst of an age of 'work', that is to say, of hurry, of indecent and perspiring haste, which wants to 'get everything done' at once, including every old or new book: – this art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches to read *well*, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers . . . My patient friends, this book desires for itself only perfect readers and philologists: *learn* to read me well! –

Ruta, near Genoa, in the autumn of 1886