

1-1-1995

## The Rough Magic: The Life of Teaching

Dean S. Dorn

*California State University, Sacramento*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/csr>

---

### Recommended Citation

Dorn, Dean S. (1995) "The Rough Magic: The Life of Teaching," *Clinical Sociology Review*: Vol. 13: Iss. 1, Article 20.

Available at: <http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/csr/vol13/iss1/20>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@WayneState. It has been accepted for inclusion in Clinical Sociology Review by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@WayneState.

of the author's thesis is that goodness occurs in a social context. Her book makes explicit what is implicit, namely that the morals of the therapist are critical. The therapist must be a morally active change agent or the patient merely exchanges one dubious parental superego for another.

Dr. Nicholas brings us to the edge of goodness with insight. However, it has been my clinical experience that insight is not enough as gained in individual psychotherapy for sustained behavioral change. I fully echo the author's understanding of the synergistic effect of individual and group psychotherapy as a catalyst for moral change. The book is heavy on "shoulds" and "oughts" and light on "how to." This book on "Mystery" of Goodness could easily be called the "Mastery" of Goodness. This was not light, escape reading. I felt a moral obligation to read it and having done so, feel definitely the better for it. It is unfortunate that we need such a book to remind us as human beings to be kind and gentle toward and with each other. There is an aphorism of Hillel in Hebrew, paraphrased: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"

**This Rough Magic: The Life of Teaching**, by Daniel A. Lindley. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey. 1993. 142 pp., \$15.95 paperback. ISBN 0-89789-366-2  
*Dean S. Dorn*  
*California State University, Sacramento*

This book integrates the author's recent experiences with Jungian psychology with his many years of experience teaching both adolescents in the secondary classroom and students going into teaching in the college classroom. He is currently completing the analyst training program of the Jung Institute of Chicago. For over twenty years he was Chair of English Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In the preface he states his thesis (xii): "I am interested in what happens in actual successful classrooms, but I am just as interested in what happens in the psyche of the successful teacher over time. Technique without the involvement of the teacher's soul—psyche, literally—is worse than hollow: It is a sham, and will immediately be seen through by students."

Lindley wants to understand teaching in a deep way. For him teaching has two planes (public and private) and two domains (the teacher and the "Other," the separate student). The task of being a great teacher is to understand the "mystery under the craft" of teaching and to join up as an equal with the student. What is being taught in the curriculum

must resonate with the inner state of the student and the teacher. Therefore, the intellectual and content aspects of teaching cannot be separated from feelings and emotions. Lindley believes, however, that we have it all wrong. In the typical classroom, content rules. The teacher is merely the “purveyor of material” and the student is merely an “empty vessel” waiting to be filled when the right teacher shows up. This view denies the importance of the “inner world of the teacher and the student” where all teaching is shaped to some extent. This inner world is the domain of the psyche. This is the source of all good teaching.

Using the Jungian concept of archetypes, Lindley posits that unconsciously in every adult there is an inner child and that in every child there is an inner adult. “Each teacher has a conscious, out-in-the-world teacher self as well as an unconscious inner child. And each student has an unconscious inner adult.” (p.44) Hence, good teaching must be based on the inner child of the teacher (his or her own childishness) bringing about the inner and knowing adult in the student. Only in this way is there a joining, a bonding of the student with the teacher, which is the key to successful teaching. Students must be made to feel like adults so they can join the teacher in learning the curriculum, and the teacher must allow the spontaneous and exploring child within to come forth so the teacher can join the child as an equal. In good teaching the connection between the teacher and the student is one of transference and countertransference. The child (student) within the teacher is nourished by actual students and the adult (teacher) within each child is nourished by the presence of the actual teacher. This creates a bond, a state of empathy between the teacher and the student. The inner child of the teacher makes the student feel like a responsible adult and that, in turn, makes the student want to help the teacher.

Poor teaching is the opposite—teaching through the use of power and will alone when the teacher’s power is used to control and repress the child. In poor teaching, “learners are ‘found out’ when they act like children—when they are loud or impulsive.” (p. 45). When there is a relationship between the child and the teacher that is equal, power cannot intervene and destroy learning. Poor teaching then is to teach from the teacher’s adult perspective (with will and authority) where the hidden agenda is the teacher’s need for power. When there is poor teaching, children are expected to act like adults but are treated like children (the real hidden curriculum). A poor teacher is one whose inner child has died or been repressed into the unconscious, so that “students come to seem more distant, more ignorant, more uncaring,

less worth the effort." (p. 107) With poor teachers there is nothing new to learn or to teach.

For Lindley the path to becoming a good teacher means pondering our own stories; we must find out who we are in relation to the curriculum we teach. Good teaching does not begin with technique or pedagogy, but rather with "personal reflection begun in the teacher and continued in the student." (p. 60) Teachers should ask about their lesson plans, "How did I learn this?" not "How shall I teach this?" Teachers need to look back and see themselves as the unknowing child so they can see their students reflected in the mirror of their reflection. The point of departure is to ask questions about the content of what is taught the way a child would ("open, non-judgmental, taking in experience whole") so that the teacher is free to ask the child those same questions when they teach the child.

Throughout the book, Lindley masterfully weaves his own story and experiences of teaching with his Jungian philosophy of teaching and learning. He presents many specific examples to illustrate his points and support his view. And as a true blue clinician he offers much that is practical: only attempt to change what is possible in your teaching and in your classroom (getting students to have an open mind, motivation, the curriculum, time), not the impossible (the lack of concern and effort by other teachers).

This is an excellent little book that is full of much insight and wisdom about teaching and which can provide the classroom teacher at all levels of instruction with much to think about. For this author, teaching is a liminal experience, betwixt and between the student and the teacher, the school and the curriculum. This book substantially illuminates that space. And no teacher who reads it will be able to put it down without reflecting on their own place within that space.

**When Love Dies: The Process of Marital Disaffection**, by Karen Kayser. New York: The Guilford Press, 1993. 191 pp. \$26.95 Cloth. ISBN 0-89862-086-4.

*Dean Reschke*

*Center for Problem-Solving Therapy  
Schaumburg, Illinois*

During an interview on National Public Radio several years ago, the pioneering family therapist Salvador Minuchin was asked how he accounted for the high divorce rate (nearly fifty percent) in America. He responded