

At the risk of arousing in certain quarters the feelings of horror and consternation so marvellously represented by Paolo Uccello in his *Desecration of the Host*, we feel obliged—for the question arises more and more often—to record our disagreement with the large number of public personalities at the present time who demand of scientists in general and mathematicians in particular that they should devote their energies to producing the legions of technologists whose existence is, it appears, urgently indispensable to our survival. Things being as they are, it seems to us that in the scientifically and technologically over-developed “great” nations in which we live, the first duty of the mathematician—and of many others—is to produce what is *not* demanded of him, namely men who are capable of thinking for themselves, of unmasking false arguments and ambiguous phrases, and to whom the dissemination of truth is infinitely more important than, for example, world-wide three-dimensional colour T.V.: free men, and not robots ruled by technocrats. It is sad but true that the best way of producing such men does not consist in teaching them mathematics and physical science; for these are branches of knowledge which ignore the very existence of human problems, and it is a disturbing thought that our most highly civilized societies accord them the first place. But even in the teaching of mathematics it is at least possible to attempt to impart a taste for freedom and reason, and to accustom the young to being treated as human beings endowed with the faculty of reason.