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ASCENTS IN HISTORY

IT becomes necessary from time to time to defend the branches of learning from the specialists who practice them. Lewis Feuer, it may be remembered, performed this service for Philosophy in the *New York Times Magazine* (April 24, 1966), in an article charging that the preoccupation of academic philosophy with linguistics is "essentially a training in disputation in the medieval tradition." After noting that the great innovators in Western thought were not professional philosophers, not even academicians—"men such as Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Locke and Hume [were] physicists, mathematicians, political scientists who had almost no connection with universities"—he went on to say:

> When philosophy becomes academic, the results are much the same as when art becomes academic. What great novel could have been written to satisfy a Ph.D. requirement in Creative Writing? Or what great painting could have been done to secure a degree in Creative Art? It is quite otherwise in the sciences where the methods and techniques of verification and experiment on the whole provide a common ground upon which almost all will meet.
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> When philosophy becomes academic, it tries to emulate the sciences, to employ methods and criteria which the profession in general will accept. The pressures in the universities to be "scientific" are now overwhelming. Therefore, academic philosophers look for some device which will seem to make their "discipline" as objective, scientific and examination-gradable as physics or mathematics. A generation ago mathematical logic was the favored device. Today, as this is being discarded, the study of ordinary language, a kind of descriptive lexicography, is taken as the examinable core of philosophy. Would a James, Kierkegaard or Nietzsche ever have been able to get his mature philosophical works accepted for a Ph.D. degree? Probably not.

What happens to real philosophy in such circumstances? Well, in William Arrowsmith's graphic phrase, "it takes to the streets," where, as he says, it must compete with "every demagogue or fraud." Yet this exposure to the rough manners of the market place may not be a misfortune. A philosophy which cannot, sooner or later, penetrate to the market place will be of little value to mankind, and Socrates, let us note, *began* there. In any event, the authors of the works which now engage the philosophical longings of the young were not men who sought refuge in academies.

What of other academic specialties—say, history? Here, also, some defense is necessary. For this purpose we are able to draw on a distinguished professional, Carl Becker, who wrote so well about history that any young man who reads him thoroughly may be tempted to become a historian. In *Everyman His Own Historian* (Crofts, 1935), Becker briefly summarized the pitfalls involved:

> In primitive times, when tradition is orally transmitted bards and story-tellers frankly embroider or improvise the facts to heighten the dramatic impact of the story. With the use of written records, history, gradually differentiated from fiction, is understood as the story of events that actually occurred, and with the increase and refinement of knowledge the historian recognizes that his first duty is to be sure of his facts, let their meaning be what it may. Nevertheless, in every age history is taken to be a story of actual events from which a significant meaning may be derived; and in every age the illusion is that the present version is valid because the related facts are true, whereas former versions are invalid because based on inaccurate or inadequate facts.
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> Never was this conviction more impressively displayed than in our own time—that age of erudition in which we live, or from which we are perhaps just emerging. Finding the course of history littered with the *debris* of exploded philosophies, the historians of the last century, unwilling to be forever duped, turned away (as they fondly hoped) from "interpretation" to the rigorous examination of the factual event, just as it occurred. . . . To establish the facts is always in

> order, and is indeed the first duty of the historian; but to suppose that the facts, once established in all their fullness, will "speak for themselves" is an illusion. It was perhaps peculiarly the illusion of those historians of the last century who found some special magic in the word "scientific." The scientific historian it seems, was one who set forth the facts without injecting an extraneous meaning into them. . . . Thus the scientific historian deliberately renounced philosophy only to submit to it without being aware. His philosophy was just this, that by not taking thought a cubit would be added to his stature. With no other preconception than the will to know, the historian would reflect in his surface and film the "order of events throughout past times in all places"; so that, in the fullness of time, when innumerable patient expert scholars, by "exhausting the resources," should have reflected without refracting the truth of all the facts, the definitive and impregnable meaning of human experience would emerge of its own accord to enlighten and emancipate mankind. Hoping to find something without looking for it, expecting to obtain final answers to life's riddle by resolutely refusing to ask questions—it was surely the most romantic species of realism yet invented, the oddest attempt ever made to get something for nothing!

At the end of this stimulating paper, in a melancholy last paragraph, Prof. Becker warns us that all our yesterdays must eventually diminish and grow dim—that the world will actually forget the Declaration of Independence, the Magna Carta, the crossing of the Rubicon, and the battle of Marathon. These events, he says, in which we find so much meaning, will be replaced by other happenings more recent in time. Then comes what seems a profound insight into history as we endeavor to write it—that is, in terms of cause and effect. "It is," he writes, "the limitation of the genetic approach to human experience that it must be content to transform problems since it can never solve them." The *meaning* of history, then, in the sense of causal explanation, inevitably remains unknown.

Why, then, read or study history?

If knowing the past will not really "explain" the present, why should a man bother to learn about it?

Well, the fact is that even if we declare history to be but the continuation of insoluble problems, we are going to go right on writing and reading history, although we may call it something else. A case could be made for the idea that everything in science which is not mathematics is some kind of history—a description, that is, of what we know of the behavior of things. The less mathematical a science, the more descriptive it must be, or remain, until the behavior is put into an equation—which is the mathematical form of description, by means of which we are often able to convert knowledge into power.

So history remains the raw material of much of our learning. We can't avoid the writing of history; but we can and should avoid being deluded by spurious causal explanations based on it.

But this analysis, which has too conclusive an air, overlooks a primary use of history which we all make. It is a use which ignores the "genetic approach," and may be illustrated by the habit of an elderly Scottish lady who would often say to her small grandson, "Ian MacGregor, never forget that you are a MacGregor!"—an injunction the lad could hardly follow without learning the history of the clan.

Our history, in short, throws some light upon our identity. It is, as Becker says, "the artificial extension of the social memory."

How much of the feeling of identity is owed to memory? Stripped of our various recollections, to what extent would we know who we are? An extraordinary man, perhaps, would know quite a bit about himself—memory is not the only means of self-apprehension, nor the most important—simply from consulting his intuitive sense of purpose as a man. And we are as yet hardly expert enough in psychology to provide an account of the various sorts of memory which a man stricken by amnesia might tap. The entire range of the unconscious comes into the question, including the "archetypes" Jung speaks of, which surely may be regarded as parts of the recoverable

past. Plato was convinced, as he shows in the *Meno*, that the soul has its own trans-physical history, with memories that can be recalled through some effort, aided by Socratic questioning.

Arthur Morgan shows a major claim of history to our attention when he says (in his recently published *Observations*):

> A person without history or knowledge of the past must see the world as commonplace because, except at extreme times he is going to live among commonplace people who have come to that conclusion. . . . The only way to get the sum and substance of human experience is to reach out beyond the years we have into the years of the past, into the significant experiences of the human race.

The same idea is expressed by Santayana, with emphasis on the need for breadth and structure in a man's sense of moral obligation:

> A barbarian *is* no less subject to the past than is the civic man who knows what the past is and means to be loyal to it; but the barbarian, for want of a transpersonal memory, crawls among superstition which he cannot understand or revoke and among people he may hate or love, but whom he can never think of raising to a higher plane, to the level of a purer happiness. The whole dignity of human endeavor *is* thus bound up with historic issues, and as conscience needs to be controlled by experience if it is to become rational, so personal experience itself needs to be enlarged ideally if the failures and successes it reports are to touch impersonal interests.

There is still another way to consider history. We have suggested that what is not mathematics in science has the form of history, and that progress in science has been for the most part the conversion of historical description into mathematical description, giving what we know about external things the form of timeless truth. Can history itself—the history of human affairs—be subjected to a similar transformation?

Well, when historical processes are generalized, taking them out of the frames of time and circumstance, they are called *myth.* Myths are made whenever men actually succeed in extracting the meaning of history. Myth is *incarnated* metaphysics—theory embodied in story, meaning returned to the Cave.

So, in one of its connotations, myth signifies the distillation of meaning, the rendering into symbolic terms of the archetypal encounters of human life. Myth abstracts the constant elements and dynamics in the quickening of men into heroes and demi-gods, sometimes displaying in colorful allegory the possibilities of a transcendent life. As an art-form, myth is the metaphor of the timeless, both appearing within and breaking out of time.

It also means distraction from reality, mere "story-telling," romantic invention. The myth, you could say, is a labyrinth of meaning which may or may not be equipped with an Ariadne's thread. Men convinced that history can be made to reveal a genetic (causally explanatory) account of human experience are bound to think that myths are nothing but fiction, the thread of transcendent meaning non-existent. The characteristic view among historians—historians in 1935, when he wrote—is given by Prof. Becker:

> We [historians] are thus of that ancient and honorable company of wise men of the tribe, of bards and story-tellers and minstrels, of sooth-sayers and priests, to whom in successive ages has been entrusted the keeping of useful myths. Let not the harmless, necessary word "myth" put us out of countenance. In the history of history a myth is a once valid but now discarded version of the human story, as our now valid versions will in due course be relegated to the category of discarded myths. With our predecessors, the bards and the storytellers and priests, we have therefore this in common: that it is our function, as it was theirs, not to create, but to preserve and perpetuate the social tradition; to harmonize, as well as ignorance and prejudice permit, the actual and remembered series of events; to enlarge and enrich the specious present common to us all to the end that "society" (the tribe, the nation, or all mankind) may judge of what it is doing in the light of what it has done and what it hopes to do.

One need not quarrel with Prof. Becker's idea of the duties of modern historians, who might well do as he suggests. Yet it can still be argued that great myths are not "discarded versions of the human story," but labyrinths for which Ariadne's

thread has been frayed away by misinterpretation and unbelief. On this view, historians ought to regard themselves as apprentice myth-makers—only apprentices, as yet, for the reason that myth-making is very nearly the most hazardous of all human activities. A mythmaker cannot help but become a shaper of human dreams. And there is a sense in which the rest of us cannot help but seek models for behavior in the myths current in our time.

Since Prof. Becker wrote this essay, scholarship has made it evident that men's lives are ruled in large part by their feelings of mythic meaning. Starting, perhaps, with Carl Jung, the rediscovery of the importance of myths has been proceeding apace for more than twenty-five years, with writers such as Mercea Eliade, Joseph Campbell, William Arrowsmith, and many others showing how closely they are woven into our psychological lives. Plato understood this well, as we see from his criticism of Homer and his attack on the mimetic poets, and volumes could be written on the harsh conformities exacted from human beings, all through European history and early American history, in obedience to Old Testament patterns of prophetic authority and moral control.

The longing for myths to live by, it seems plain, is inscribed in the breast of every human being. So, while we cannot abolish the myth—when we attempt it, we only devise rude, mechanistically mythic weapons to cut down the old beliefs—we can have criticism and comparative mythology, which, if it has any human importance, is an effort to discern the metaphysics behind myth.

How, then, shall we regard history? History ought to be the place we explore for hidden excellences—for men who struggled to rise to mythic stature, to break out of time. How many housewives, for example, venturing to attend the first year's sessions of a Great Books seminar, found themselves dewy-eyed on realizing from the *Apology* that a man like Socrates actually *lived?* That he was an ancestor of the potentialities in all of us? Socrates, you could say, was a man who, in Plato's hands, was on the way to gaining mythic significance. Or suppose a reader happens to come across William Cameron Townsend's remarkable book, *Lázero Cárdenas, Mexican Democrat* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Wahr Publishing Co., 1952), and to discover that here was a man who will bear comparison to Abraham Lincoln. A man who, in 1937, when making his first visit as President to Yucatan, received word that the leading conspirators in a plot against his government had been caught and jailed; and who telegraphed these instructions to the capital:

> Suspend all action against group of accused plotters at once. Refrain from even citing them for testimony because the government feels that its institutions cannot be endangered by any acts of sedition.

In these cynical days it does us good to learn from history that Cárdenas, while President of Mexico, lived simply, cut his income in half, ignored diplomatic functions, and gave land to the people:

> . . . with the Constitution in one hand and a transit in the other he went about breaking up huge estates wherever he found them. One-fourth of all the land which had been distributed to the peasants since 1915 was given to them during 1935, Cárdenas' first year in office. By the time he had been president twenty months, he had distributed over half as much land as had all his predecessors.

Perhaps we can say that history comes alive for us when we find in it figures or groups who, somehow or other, manage to embody in their lives recognizable meanings of the great myths. By doing so, they make some history that will never be lost.

REVIEW
TOWARD NON-POLITICAL POLITICS

THE article, "The Sickness of Government," in the Winter 1969 issue of *The Public Interest, is* one of Peter Drucker's more important contributions. Adapted from a chapter in his forthcoming book, *The Age of Discontinuity* (Harper & Row), it accomplishes what is almost never done in current discussions of government: it frees the inquiry from both ideological bias and impatient moral longing. The only limitation of the article—unfortunately an important one—is that it does not press its diagnosis beyond the study of government as such, and so does not lift the subject high enough above the level of political contention. Its argument is not at that level for Mr. Drucker, but many of his readers, one suspects, will not be able to maintain the abstraction of his stance when what he says seems to confirm so well the claims of merely partisan critics of government. (A good book to read along with this article would be Herbert Spencer's *Man and the State* [Caxton]). The central problem, in all such considerations, is to prevent either insecurity or moral longing from blinding us to undeniable facts; and, at the same time, to prevent the facts from silencing moral longing.

Mr. Drucker starts out by showing that all-powerful government has been unable to fulfill its utopian promises. This has resulted in a general skepticism toward government, leading, however, to apathy rather than a search for intelligent alternatives. This search is not pursued because a viable alternative to government authority and power seems practically unimaginable to most people. Mr. Drucker writes:

> Government is certainly all-pervasive. But is it truly strong? Or is it only big?
>
> There is mounting evidence that government is big rather than strong; that it is fat and flabby rather than powerful; that it costs a great deal but does not achieve much. . . . There is obviously little respect for government among the young—but the adults, the taxpayers, are also increasingly disenchanted. They want still more services from government. But they are everywhere approaching the point where they balk at paying for a bigger government, even though they may still want what government promises to give.

The value of Mr. Drucker's work lies in his capacity to make accurate generalizations. He is contending, not for some political objective, but for understanding of the nature of government. The result is clarity. He continues:

> The disenchantment with government cuts across national boundaries and ideological lines. It is as prevalent in Communist as in democratic societies, as common in white as in nonwhite countries. This disenchantment may well be the most profound discontinuity in the world around us. It marks a sharp change in mood and attitude between this generation and its predecessors. For seventy years or so—from the 1890's to the 1960's—mankind, especially in the developed countries was hypnotized by government. We were in love with it and saw no limit to its abilities, or to its good intentions. Rarely has there been a more torrid political love affair than that between government and the generations that reached manhood between 1918 and 1960. Anything that anyone felt needed doing during this period was to be turned over to government—and this, everyone seemed to believe, made sure that the job was already done.

How can this argument, so clearly stated by Mr. Drucker, be prevented from degenerating into political name-calling? Only, it seems clear, by projecting the analysis into an area that is free from good-guy, bad-guy associations. Mr. Drucker has not done this, and perhaps could not without seeming to exchange the subject of government for an investigation of social psychology and education. Yet his article could be greatly useful at the high-school level for practical instruction in the built-in dilemmas of a democratic society. For example:

> What explains this disenchantment with government?
>
> We expected miracles—and that always produces disillusionment. Government, it was widely believed (though only subconsciously), would produce a great many things for nothing. Cost was thought to be a function of who did something rather than of what was being attempted. There is little doubt for

> instance, that the British, in adopting the "free health service," believed that medical care would cost nothing. All that such a health service can be, of course is a form of "prepaid" medical care. Nurses, doctors, hospitals, drugs, and so on have to be paid for by somebody. But everybody expected this "somebody" to be somebody else. At the least, everyone expected that under a "free" health service the taxes of the rich would pay for the health care of the poor. But there are never enough rich people around to carry the burden of any general service.
>
> All such plans are, in effect, taxation and compulsory saving that force the individual to pay for something whether he wants it or not. This is their whole rationale, and it is not necessarily a bad rationale. But the illusion persisted that government could somehow make costs go away and produce a great deal for nothing—or at the expense of an affluent minority.

It is important to notice that Mr. Drucker is not *attack*ing the British health service, but only certain illusions concerning how the costs of the welfare state are met. Obviously, the bureaucratic solution is better than no solution for the neglected health problems of vast numbers of people. Mr. Drucker's point is that, in the nature of things, the bureaucratic solution is not the fulfillment of utopian dreams. As he says:

> The best we get from government in the welfare state is competent mediocrity. More often we do not even get that; we get incompetence such as we would not tolerate in an insurance company. In every country, there are big areas of government administration where there is no performance whatever—only costs. This is true not only of the mess of the big cities, which no government—United States, British, Japanese or Russian—has been able to handle. It is true in education. It is true in transportation. And the more we expand the welfare state, the less capable of routine mediocrity does it seem to become. . . .
>
> Government has proved itself capable of doing only two things with great effectiveness. It can wage war And it can inflate the currency. Other things it can promise, but only rarely accomplish.

Mr. Drucker's article would be more valuable if it were possible to state his arguments without seeming to justify fifty years of narrow claims in behalf of "rugged individualism" and indifference to the victims of acquisitive enterprise. For at root the trouble lies in the human tendency to seek miraculous help from some outside omnipotent authority, and not in the "wrong" political system. Aspects of socialist organization might well be adopted by a self-reliant, morally responsible people, as the most sensible way to solve certain practical problems. Arthur Morgan pointed this out many years ago. So did Seba Eldridge, in his now forgotten but important book, *Development of Collective Enterprise* (University of Kansas Press, 1943) . The point is that *any* systematic delegation of responsibility which shifts to organization tasks that individuals can do better than organization inevitably develops basic flaws and deadly inefficiencies. A change in the form or management of organization cannot help unless it brings recognition of the deeper origins of the problem. Yet Mr. Drucker's acute observations at the level of organization have obvious value:

> Certain things are inherently difficult for government. Being by design a protective institution, it is not good at innovation. It cannot really abandon anything. The moment government undertakes anything, it becomes entrenched and permanent. Better administration will not alter this. Its inability to innovate is grounded in government's legitimate and necessary function as society's protective and conserving organ.

Again:

> Government is a poor manager. It is, of necessity, concerned with procedure, just as it is also, of necessity, large and cumbersome. Government is properly conscious that it administers public funds and must account for every penny. It has no choice but to be "bureaucratic"—in the common usage of the term. Every government is, by definition, a "government of paper forms." This means inevitably high cost. For "control" of the last 10 per cent of any phenomenon always costs more than control of the first 90 per cent. If control tries to account for everything, it becomes prohibitively expensive. Yet this is what government is always expected to do. And the reason is not just "bureaucracy" and red tape, it is a much sounder one. A "little dishonesty" in government is a corrosive disease. It rapidly spreads to infect the whole body politic. . . . To fear corruption in government is not irrational. This

> means, however, that government "bureaucracy"—and its consequent high costs—cannot be eliminated. Any government that is not a "government of paper forms" degenerates rapidly into a mutual looting society.

Well, Mr. Drucker has some recommendations; he would like to see government disengage itself from programs and devote itself to intelligent decision. Government, he says, is not a good "doer," but it can have detachment from doing and thereby provide over-all thinking about the general welfare. But his criticism, in this article, is more valuable than his recommendations, not because the recommendations are without merit, but because they cannot be carried out until there is first a general grasp of what the criticisms imply—which means that they must not stop with "government." For leaving the criticism at the institutional level can only spur the application of institutional solutions. This is not what Mr. Drucker wants, although he seems to ask for it. What he really wants is wiser, better men, able to recognize that no government can serve as a surrogate deity—a wise authority that simultaneously plans for, serves, judges, and polices all us erring humans.

COMMENTARY
A VISION OF EDUCATION

THOMAS PAINE had the rare faculty of being able to speak directly to issues that the men of his time could understand, yet also to raise their sights to a vision of future possibilities. He combined rare perception with fiery enthusiasm, strength of expression with extraordinary clarity. He made the principles he stood for march with undying vigor. The character of his work is well described by borrowing his own words:

> An army of principles will penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot. It will succeed where diplomatic management would fail; neither the Rhone, the Channel, nor the ocean can arrest its progress; it will march on the horizon of the world, and it will conquer.

It does not diminish Paine's achievement to note that he had the collaboration of history. His times, in short, were *ready* for what he had to say. Victor Hugo is witness to the importance of this collaboration. To the quotation from Paine we have only to add, from Hugo: "There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world; and that is an idea whose time has come."

What if Paine lived today? No Redcoats have landed on our shores. Our troubles are more complex than the intrusions and presumptions of George III. Paine would recognize that, as a contributor to next week's MANAS puts it—

> We're in a battle with more nebulous forces. The Establishment's strength rests on dreams implanted in the mass: dream-arrangements which seem more iron than the gates of a fort. Armed revolt would be no good. In such a case rebellious guns would fire in vain against figures who couldn't be wounded.

Paine would see this, and bring into play another sort of armament. He would, we think, devise some effective variant of "Ye suffer from yourselves." But the times have not yet made possible a *general* clarity of the sort found in "The American Crisis" and "Common Sense."

Yet already, in particular areas of our culture, issues are becoming more and more manifest—as, for example, in education. The clarity and passion of a Paine are not beyond the reach of critics of education. The evils, you could say, have objectified themselves and can be listed and described. A man now performing this task is William Arrowsmith, who teaches at Wesleyan University. In a paper entitled "The Heart of Education: Turbulent Teachers," reprinted in the Fall-Winter 1968 issue of *New Directions in Teaching* (Department of Education, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402), Prof. Arrowsmith writes:

> By making education the slave of scholarship, the university has renounced its responsibility to human culture and its old, proud claim to possess, as educator and molder of men, an ecumenical function. It has disowned what teaching has always meant: a care and concern for the future of man, a Platonic love of the species, not for what is but for what it might be. It is a momentous refusal.
>
> Perhaps in the end teaching will be done better off the campus than on it. But in either place teaching is now faring very badly. I am not exaggerating. When the president of Cornell University seriously proposes that the university should abandon liberal education so that specialization can begin at matriculation (in order to reconcile the conflicting claims of teaching and scholarship), then it should be obvious even to the skeptical that education is being strangled in its citadel. And strangled on behalf of the crassest technocracy. Such suggestions come from those who apparently view themselves and the institutions they administer as mere servants of national and professional interests. . . .
>
> We . . . lack educators—by which I mean Socratic teachers: visible embodiments of the realized humanity of our aspirations, intelligence, skill and scholarship; men ripened or ripening into realization, as Socrates at the close of the Symposium comes to be and therefore embodies—personally guarantees—his own definition of love. Our universities and our society need this compelling embodiment, this exemplification of what we are presumably about, as they have never needed it before. We need men, not programs.

"Children" for this week speaks of the need for conceptions about education "so exciting that the issues of conflicting 'rights' and 'authority' become irrelevant." Prof. Arrowsmith is concerned with the essence of all such conceptions:

> The American University system is in danger of losing what is most important for its students—the ancient, crucial and high art of teaching.
>
> I am not concerned here about the teacher as transmitter or as a servant or partner of research. Such teaching is, of course, both useful and necessary, and therefore should be both effectively performed and intelligently evaluated. But just such teaching has led to the current distorted image of the teacher as being primarily a diffuser of knowledge or a popularizer.
>
> The teacher I am describing is both the end and the authority of the education he gives. This teacher, like his text, is thus the mediator between past and present, present and future, and he matters because there is no human mediator but him.
>
> He is the student's only evidence, outside the text, that a great humanity exists. Upon his impersonation both his text and his students' human fate depend. This teacher is a man who is capable of living a pure text; he is a man who in some way personifies the greatness which his subject pursues.
>
> This kind of teaching, which can alone claim to be called educational' is an essential element in all noble human culture . . . Only when large demands are made of the teacher, when we ask him to assume a primary role as educator in his own right, will it be possible to restore dignity to teaching.

This is only a small portion of the excellence of Prof. Arrowsmith's paper, which should be made into a pamphlet and spread all over the world.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
A PRINCIPAL'S DREAM

SOME light is thrown on the troubles of the universities by a report, in the *Saturday Review* for Feb. 15, on the "backgrounds, roles, and educational attitudes" of college and university trustees. The *SR* education editor, James Cass, summarizes:

> Typically? college and university trustees are male, white, in their fifties or sixties, well educated, successful in business or the professions (more than half have annual incomes in excess of $30,000), and nearly 60 per cent are Republicans.
>
> More important, in the light of the contemporary scene, are trustee attitudes toward academic freedom and the decision-making process. The great majority "favor the right to free expression by faculty in various channels of college communication," but give the impression that they "are somewhat reluctant to accept a wider notion of academic freedom." More than two-thirds, for instance, favor a screening process for all campus speakers. When it comes to making decisions, "trustees favor a hierarchical system in which decisions are made at the top and passed 'down'." For example, nearly two thirds feel that the faculty should not have a major voice in the appointment of an academic dean.

Well, it isn't so hard to take sides on the last question, at least. What reason have the trustees to assume they know more about the needs of students than the faculty?

What we long for, but seldom get, is discussion of plans and projects for education so exciting that the issues of conflicting "rights" and "authority" become irrelevant. Surely, real education can't begin until that happens. Surely there are teachers able and willing to generate an atmosphere in which students can grow in their minds instead of having to demand their rights.

Meanwhile, the struggle for "rights" goes on. In this (Feb. 15) issue of the *Saturday Review*, illustrating an article on "Revolt in the High Schools," is a photograph of a spectacled sixteen-year-old talking to a surrounding group of policemen. The caption reads: "The young man above is trying to explain to police officers at a student demonstration why he should not be arrested—'The revolt itself testifies that students have been learning more than the schools have taught'." Can't they *see?*

High school underground papers are becoming the rule instead of the exception. And the brightest of the students seem to be getting them out. The *SR* "Revolt" story, by Diane Divoky, reports:

> Last year, John Freeburg, a senior at rural South Kitsap High School outside of Seattle, Washington, began to edit and publish a mimeographed newspaper for students that reflected his own opposition to the Vietnam war, as well as to the adult Establishment's reaction to long hair. John himself was clean-cut in every sense of the word. The son of a commercial airlines pilot, a boy who spent summers working with diabetic: children, he was a principal's dream: a consistent high honor student, one of three chosen by the faculty as "outstanding students," a student council representative, and ironically regional winner of the Veterans' of Foreign Wars "What Democracy Means to Me" contest. Even in getting out his paper, he operated true to form, submitting articles to the school administration for approval before each issue.
>
> In spite of this, three months before graduation John was suspended, and his parents' efforts to have him reinstated by the school board proved fruitless. . .

The ACLU has stepped in, bringing an action in his behalf. Meanwhile, the-SR writer's comment seems about right:

> His school said he was old enough to praise democracy publicly, but not to speak about its seamier aspects. Rather than practicing the ideals of freedom and tolerance it preached, the school used its power to suppress ideas. Something was terribly wrong, John decided, not just across the world in Vietnam, but in the institution that was supposed to educate him.

The kind of student intelligence pouring into these underground papers is illustrated by the second issue of *Us*, issued by students of the Ann Arbor (Mich.) High School, in which the editors told about what happened in reaction to their first issue:

> The suppression we encountered was frightening. The savage in Huxley's *Brave New World* comments on our situation, saying to the Controller, "You got rid of them. Yes that's just like you. Getting rid of everything unpleasant instead of learning to put up with it. Whether 'tis better in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them . . . But you don't do either. Neither suffer nor oppose. You just abolish the slings and arrows. It's too easy." We fear the brave new world, we fear . . . "lobotomized" education, especially in this tremendous school. The issue which was created with this publication was not one of censorship of the *Optimist.* The school paper is possibly the best in the nation. Outside of administrative demands on space and content, we do not question its excellence. The existence of anti-distribution laws for student literature is the major objection. This is a violation of our constitutional rights. If this journalistic endeavor is a failure, it can easily be forgotten. But if you or they force us to stop, we are all failures. Then, this school, city, and country, and the principles they supposedly represent are lies.

As Miss Divoky concludes:

> The revolt itself testifies that students have been learning more than the schools have taught: from parents who are as well or better educated than teachers, from the mass media with which the school finds itself in competition; from actual participation in the politics and culture of the society. To accept this knowledge and experience means facing up to a set of complicated problems. To deny it is to deny the students themselves.

Picking up where we left off (in "Children" for Feb. 26) on talking with children and teaching them new words, we have some samples of word introduction thought up by Mary O'Neill, and set down in *Words, Words, Words,* (Doubleday, 1966). Here is one titled "Grovel":

> Shovel and grovel are rather alike
> And they both are related to ground
> One is to dig with—the other one means
> Your character's crawling around.

And one called "Imagination":

> Imagination is a new idea beginning
> In the warm, soft earth of all we know

Well, the poems aren't all this good, but some youngsters enjoy them so much they start reading them aloud to their parents.

FRONTIERS

Redressing Balances

ALTERNATIONS in theories of the nature of man vary from tender-minded to tough-minded interpretations. Despite a very different trend in humanistic psychological theory, the strictly "scientific" view of man now in the ascendant is on the tough-minded side. Robert Ardrey, author of *Territorial Imperative*, remarks in a review of *Human Aggression* by Anthony Storr (*New York Times Book Review*, July 14, 1968) that the past few years have seen the rapid rise of "a new approach to the understanding of human nature, an approach emphasizing the influences of our animal origins." Mr. Ardrey defends the author's conclusions on the ground that he is a practicing psychiatrist who cannot be charged with studying only animals. Dr. Storr maintains that aggression is deeply built into man's nature, and that while its effects may horrify us, "each one of us harbors within himself those same savage impulses which lead to murder, to torture and to war." Neglect of this reality, the reviewer thinks, brings only confusion:

> We have failed not only to control aggression; we have failed, many suspect, even to understand it. Inhibitions of most honorable order—rational loyalty to the perfectibility of man, humanist concern for man's dignity and liberal concern for his environments, traditional American optimism and visions of Utopia—all have reduced our most persuasive explanations to little but exorcisms. And it is of minimum wonder. All, excepting only a scatter of religious convictions, have come to us through the Rousseau fallacy: Man is born pacific and good; when he seems of a contrary nature, then the world has made him so.
>
> Dr. Storr dissents. He takes as his premise a Lorenz [Konrad Lorenz] conclusion: No organism could grow to maturity and reproduce its kind without the pressure of inborn aggressiveness. No oak could pass beyond the sapling stage, no clone of amoebas beyond the earliest divisions, no fledgling eagle beyond the eyrie's rim, no human infant beyond its mother's skirts, were we not aggressive. We should otherwise die. Aggression is normal, inborn, necessary.

This is an old, old argument. Here, in its latest version, it is claimed that nature, not nurture, makes us hostile and aggressive. Redesigning the environment, in other words, will not eliminate hostility. There seems little doubt that Dr. Storr has hold of some kind of truth: the question is, how should it be interpreted? The human tendency, as we know from the history of thought, is to extrapolate a newly discovered "truth" about man into a sweeping metaphysic and then to deduce from it rules of behavior that at last are grounded on "fact." The reservations and qualifications of the discoverer are seldom noticed by the popularizers of the new doctrine. Now we can *settle* a lot of things, they tell us. For example, from the Law of Aggression, anyone can see that we have got to have the Sentinel Anti-Ballistic Missile System. And so on.

So, the influence of Dr. Storr's book could easily contribute to another chapter in the history of social Darwinism, and for reminder of what this means the reader might look at "Racism and Imperialism" in Richard Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism in American Thought.*

This result is by no stretch of the imagination desired by either Dr. Storr or the reviewer. But what becomes plain, even from the review, is that the conceptual vocabulary available to these writers has not enabled them to make a clear distinction between self-reliant independence—an essential of maturity—and aggressive behavior harmful to others. These are quotations from the author:

> In adult life, the aggressive drive which in childhood enabled the individual to break free of parental domination serves to preserve and define identity. . . . The parent who is too yielding gives the child nothing to come up against. . . . No child can test out his developing strength by swimming in treacle.

Dr. Storr would like to distinguish between becoming a man and becoming an aggressor, but he finds it difficult:

> The desire for power has, in extreme form, disastrous aspects which we will acknowledge; but

> the drive to conquer difficulties or to gain mastery over the external world underlies the greatest of human achievements. . . .
>
> One difficulty is that there is no clear dividing line between those forms of aggression which we all deplore and those which we must not disown if we are to survive.

Yet Mr. Ardrey draws a conclusion from the book that seems to point to the solution. A strengthened sense of identity, he says, enables men to control their aggressive tendencies:

> Anything that nourishes our need for individual identity and offers prospect for higher self-esteem tends to keep our aggressions within acceptable bounds. But all those forces so familiar in our time—overpopulation and the density of cities, the empty home and the jammed classroom, the bigness of industry, man a statistic, the collective ideal whether socialist or capitalist—all speak of anonymity and the despair of indignity. And all are accomplices to the violent way.

It begins to be apparent that a man's idea of "self" has a decisive effect on how he uses his ego-strength—whether it will be to maintain moral independence or for asserting domination over others. This restores the importance of environmental influence, since the culture has much to do with how people think of themselves. The psychological environment is crucial in this, although there is no real agreement on what it ought to be. The most familiar theory, that of conventional social science, "equates identity with *social* identity and delineates the features of modern industrial society that prevent the establishment of firm, preferably life-long social identities." Practically opposite is the existentialist view:

> Writers influenced by existentialism complain that modern society, far from preventing identity-formation by failing to provide secure roles, depersonalizes the individual by forcing him into standardized roles and treating him as an altogether replaceable integer in a mass. . . . This tradition appears to be directly at odds with the sociologic critique that regards identity as a result of anchorage in a group or social role and condemns the atomization, rootlessness and anomie of modern life. Yet popular social criticism borrows freely from both perspectives, seemingly unaware of the contradictions between them. (Dennis Wrong, in *Dissent* for September, October, 1968.)

This is a sort of contradiction we need to become sharply aware of, since it is not a matter that should be settled by experts over our heads. A brief anecdote may help with what is at stake. A few years ago, a man who had distinguished himself in the rehabilitation of broken and hopeless human beings, agreed to teach a course in a local college. He told the students to call him by his nickname. "You can call my son 'mister'," he said, "but don't bother with that for me. I don't need it, but maybe he still does."

Here, in a joke, is illustrated the transition from one kind of identity to another. The mature man doesn't need external forms of personal recognition. He doesn't need the defenses of aggression. In other words, selfhood which depends upon status—and requiring aggression for its maintenance—is hardly human selfhood at all.

So, what the modern world needs is an anthropology which recognizes the transcendence of the highest forms of self-recognition. Until we get it, we shall go on having uninspired "social science" and anthropological analysis—founded on "facts," of course, but facts selected and weighted according to a concept of self antagonistic to authentic human development. Such facts employ "science" to chain the self-conceptions of human beings to the lowest levels of thought.

It should be realized that classic evolution doctrine includes a highly differentiated conception of *man's* evolution. Thomas H. Huxley put it this way in his famous Romanes lecture:

> The practice of that which is ethically best—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct which in all respects is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading

> down, all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect but shall help his fellows. . . . Let us understand, once for all, that the ethical progress of society depends not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it.

Unfortunately, Huxley's expression is very general. What is wanted is a more compelling *subjective* appeal to what we know of ourselves from the inside—something which says in the modern idiom what the Buddha said twenty-five hundred years ago, while showing full cognizance of the "facts" of aggressive behavior in both animals and man:

> A false self in the midst ye plant, and make
> A world around which seems;
> Blind to the heights beyond, . . .
> Dumb to the summons of the true life kept
> For him who false puts by.
>
> So grow the strifes and lusts which make earth's war,
> So grieve poor cheated hearts and flow salt tears;
> So wax the passions, envies, angers, hates;
> So years chase blood-stained years
>
> With wild red feet . . . .