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THE FREEDOM OF THE AGGRIEVED

IF you go back into the American past—as far back, say, as the times brought to life by Elizabeth Madox Roberts in *The Great Meadow*, or by Conrad Richter in *The Trees*—you get a sense of the uncomplicated goodness, the extraordinary *freedom*—there is no other word—which all Americans like to believe is the tap root of their being. It is this idea which makes them feel that the Western hemisphere is really their *home*.

Now Freedom, as we know, is one of those magnificent abstractions under the heading of which we collect various indefinable essences of human delight. We think we know what freedom means until we encounter the efforts of scholars to give it limiting definition, and then, if we take the scholars seriously, we feel somehow diminished by their logical claims. They are "right," of course. They compel us to agree on rational grounds. Yet to ourselves we argue that the incommensurable reality we know as *real* freedom is too elusive for their devitalizing definitions, and, except when cornered in "serious" conversation, we go on ignoring what they have said.

There is probably a profound truth in this reaction to scholarly accounts of freedom. The difficulty is in giving it more than exclamatory expression. Most likely, this is because Freedom is one of a class of ideas which on the surface have tangible, practical meanings, but also reach down into deep, feeling-tone dimensions of timeless value, where all definitions are bound to fail.

We may know these things somewhere in our being, but take a much brighter view of definitions when we think we are losing some of our freedom and want to get it back. Then we look admiringly at the concreteness of practical definition in the hope of recapturing by design the ideal conditions which are supposed to have existed in the past. In these attempts, of course, we are dealing with analogues and symbols, not realities. Actually, the lives of the pioneers on the frontier were severely circumscribed by physical circumstances. In terms of the possible manipulation of their environment, there were only very narrow possibilities for the first Americans. But we must add that this environment was universally recognized as *natural*, so there was hardly anything to argue about. They probably never mentioned their glorious freedom. The wholeness we envy in the pioneer life came from the absence of artificial or social constraint, but there was a great deal of constraint. Those people who contended with the wilderness and the Indians experienced their freedom the way any man or woman totally engrossed in the work of the day will enjoy the being-aspect of life without conceptualizing or defining it at all.

The conceptualizations about freedom that in time became necessary, because of the general uniformities of experience, were comparatively simple. And preoccupation with them was doubtless the exception rather than the rule. So, as a result, the working over-simplification of the meaning of freedom devised for the political needs of the times accomplished far less distortion than the over-simplifications of later periods of history.

There are dozens of ways in which the deceptions of formal over-simplification confuse us. Political over-simplifications often ignore, for example, the increase in the *social* determination of the conditions of the environment, which, unlike the conditions established by nature, are filled with moral ambiguity. Extreme differences are hidden by conceptual abstractions which ignore that the environment is no longer more or less the same for all.

Here, one striking contrast between a conceptualization of the good and actual human attitudes may serve to illustrate the problem. Late in the nineteenth century, William James made a train trip through North Carolina. Looking out of the window, he saw numerous examples of what he regarded as extreme desecration of nature. The settlers in the North Carolina mountains had cleared their land by girdling large trees—as most of the "pioneers" probably did—and had left small stumps standing in fields they surrounded with rail fence to keep out pigs and cattle. They were growing corn in the fields with the stumps. James was horrified:

> The forest had been destroyed; and what had "improved" it out of existence was hideous, a sort of ulcer, without a single element of artificial grace to make up for the loss of Nature's beauty. . . . Talk about going back to Nature! I said to myself oppressed by the dreariness. . . . No modern person ought to be willing to live a day in such a state of rudimentariness and denudation.

Later on James visited one of the mountaineers and was compelled to rearrange his abstractions about the good life. "Why we ain't happy here," the man told him proudly, "unless we are getting one of these coves under cultivation." James recorded his reaction:

> I instantly felt that I had been losing the whole forward significance of the situation. . . . To me the clearings spoke of naught but denudation. . . . But, when *they* looked on the hideous stumps, what they thought of was personal victory. The chips, the girdled trees, and the vile split rails spoke of honest sweat, persistent toil and final reward. . . . In short, the clearing, which to me was a mere ugly picture on the retina, was to them a symbol redolent with moral memories and sang a very pæan of duty, struggle and success.

Well, we have another illustration. It's fairly easy, in terms of the political abstraction of "freedom," to develop the logic behind American intervention in Vietnam. You stipulate that thought control is bad, that expropriation of property and state control of both economic and private life are intolerable evils; then, after adding the domino theory of Communist expansion and the grandiose idea of defense of democratic freedom all over the world, you have the ideological justification for the presence of American troops in Vietnam. But if you *go* to Vietnam, talk to people who are willing to respond unguardedly, and visit the hospitals where wounded civilians are cared for—ten civilian casualties to one military, it is said—you may find yourself rearranging your abstractions just the way William James did.

This contrast, for one not prepared to make it, can be almost more than he can bear. The formal over-simplifications that we have taken for granted as defining the necessities of "freedom" are now recognized as grossly misleading. The war in Vietnam hardly seems to involve the question of freedom at all, now, but only deep and endless human agony.

There are of course less poignant ways of displaying such contradictions. Researches conducted for the past ten years or so by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions have been amply reported in books and pamphlets and occasional papers, all pointing to the fact that the political specifications of human good embodied in American law and tradition are no longer adequate or workable oversimplifications. What needs to be added to this conclusion is the emphatic declaration that they *are* and *always have been* over-simplifications—not embodiments of undoubted truth. It is the failure on the part of nearly every one of us to recognize that conceptual analysis and political definition are limited in scope and can be raised to total authority only at the cost of essential values—it is the assumption that our political truths, because of their abstract verity and logical interdependence, can contain the very meaning of our lives—that turns us into ideological fanatics, stern activists who are proudly willing to destroy the world, if need be, to save our "principles."

Now what has actually happened, besides the fact that our lives are no longer lived according to

the scale of our abstractions about human meaning and good? Besides the endless complexity in the planes and combinations of our circumstances, to which those abstractions were never expected to apply? Besides the multiplication of differences in circumstances, to the point where outlook and interest vary widely from person to person, from family to family and group to group? Besides the subordination of the natural environment to technological organization and control, until it hardly seems a factor in our lives, except as purveyed by promoters of real estate, the travel agencies, and vacation resorts? Besides the growth of government to proportions far beyond our capacity to comprehend, prescribe, or control? Besides the degradation of the political process into the manipulation of symbols and persuasion by emotional reflex, with an ever more vulgarizing exploitation of the clichés of traditional American virtues—which by now are almost entirely identified with what can be bought at either the polls or the store?

To be brief, we have moved right into the center of our lives a class of problem which used to be encountered at the periphery. In the past the problem of Freedom was dealt with only occasionally, and without the illusion that *everything* turned on how we related our inner feelings about values to the formal political over-simplifications. We have become victims, that is, of a fraudulent sense of power over our own lives, and we expect by manipulating that power—which only *seems* to be available to us—to get exactly what we want. It doesn't work.

To put this in other words: Because our manipulative capacities have become so great, so demanding of our energy, and so falsely promising as to what they can do, we have insensibly turned over to them all that religion and philosophy and even common sense were once supposed to accomplish in our lives. This isn't a claim that our forefathers were "deeply religious" people who always followed high moral mandates in their decisions and lived enriching inner lives along with their other achievements. Perhaps they did these things, in their way, but the fact is that there was a kind of "slack" which spaced out the obvious moral obligations of a pioneering people who were able to spread over a great continent and busy themselves in a variety of materially constructive ways, getting what they wanted and building and organizing everything that they could.

Only a little attention to the formal over-simplifications seemed really necessary in those days—church on Sunday, politics on election day—and a tough-minded pragmatic approach to everything else. That was how you took care of the women's concern for a good family life, and how you kept in office the kind of referees who understood what was meant by the talk about "freedom."

Things are different now. We hear the abstractions every day, and repeat them to one another (what else can you do?), but the conditions are so changed that only nostalgic memory of the good things behind the abstractions can touch our feelings. So, when we talk about freedom, the only thing that sounds practical is a demand for the "freedom of the aggrieved"—the freedom we think we used to have but don't any more—the freedom which we say is just around the corner, if only we could just *swing* things in that direction. It is the freedom that doesn't exist, but *ought* to, and would, if we could develop a method of either converting or doing away with certain kinds of people everywhere in the world, to leave the good, freedom-loving ones unhampered in working out all their good intentions.

It isn't that there are not a lot of things wrong; there are, and they need to be corrected. That is what makes us so furious, and so morally confused. We know that there has to be *action.* But in the past—the past on which we base our theories of action—we were never really compelled to distinguish between what you can accomplish by action, and what you must do by

thinking, by internal adjustment, and by bearing your pain. This is a way of saying that the "philosophers" in the world of the past have all been volunteers. They could all have done something else. And that is why, one must suppose, there have been so few of them, and why the life of the philosopher is so little valued and understood.

What is a philosopher? There are dozens of definitions, but the one that seems best here is that a philosopher is a man who doesn't lose his humanistic equilibrium. No matter how great the pressure, he never behaves badly, never becomes something less than a wise and good man. He generates his own moral environment, no matter what is available as raw material. He figures out how to make it work.

Today, without having to explain in large metaphysical terms why, we may say that our circumstances require us to learn to be philosophers, even just *beginning* philosophers, or we shall fail most miserably as human beings. There are no longer any spaces or avenues for escape from individual responsibility. The system of life we have created is all-embracing, and the slack is almost gone.

Again, what has actually happened? Well, we have stretched out our formal over-simplifications, our definitions of "freedom" and of the other "goods" our system is supposed to cherish, to a point where they simply break down. They never really were the same thing as the inner savors of a free life. And they were never a sure thing. We know this because even though you make some men externally free, they are still miserable, useless, unproductive, and keep asking for more. In the old days, when such men could just be ignored, Nature took care of them. It's much more complicated now; Nature doesn't filter out character, and we don't know how to do it ourselves without becoming terrible partisans or prejudiced dictators. In short, the Nature theory has become about as unpopular as it can get because of the practice of men who decided they *knew* how Nature would take care of human problems. Both laissez faire economics and scientific socialism are humanly devised imitations of Natural Law. And both are extremely unpopular.

There is only one solution. There is no point in juggling concepts any more. No use in tinkering with the great big social machine. It's just a machine. The solution is to recognize that conceptual definitions of human good can convey only the shadow, not the substance, of human good. The solution is to relegate political and institutional measures to second-degree function in all relations to human life. These measures are not crucial to human good and never have been. The volunteers of human good, the philosophers, have proved this. They have been good men under any and all circumstances, under any and all laws.

A lot of people have understood this. The great religious teachers all knew it. The philosophers knew it. The anarchists knew it, but instead of going on to become philosophers they got mad at the stupidity of all the rest. No system will solve our problems, even though you may have to have a system. No laws will make us free, even though laws may be needed to go with the practice of freedom. No planning, however sagacious, however resourceful, and however generously considerate of everybody's needs, can provide for the growth of human beings, mainly for the reason that growth into freedom is sooner or later confined and stultified by the best laid plans. Every plan that starts out by saying yes ends with a lot of no's. That is the nature of plans, which, to work, can never be permitted to say more than "maybe," and the planners don't like that, while the people, who always expect more and more from the planners, don't like it either; so how can you really plan?

The situation comes down to a very simple thing—that there are basic parameters in the moral life of human beings which cannot be violated without destroying their moral identity.

There are inner regions of decision, places of dialogue with oneself, which cannot be collapsed any more than you can let your lungs collapse and still breathe. When politics and technology pre-empt these areas, you get war and genocide. You get apathy and tyranny, hypocrisy and napalm, impotence and fear. You can't have a society of free individuals without first having individuals—people who have some acquaintance with themselves and know that they *are* individuals. In order to become a philosopher, you have to be an individual first. This means, in our time, deliberate efforts at self-understanding, the enlargement of conscious subjectivity. It means to start listening, however desperately at first, to what Emerson called "the soul's enormous claim."

REVIEW
A WONDERFUL INFECTION

THE spread of Socratic ignorance, of Taoistic simplicity, and therefore of balanced self-perception, seems to be a characteristic of the times. That it is found mostly in the writings of humanistic psychologists is probably deceptive; articulate expression of Taoistic moods in one quarter should not make us suppose that similar realizations are not going on in other men. Another sort of evidence comes from artists and writers, suggesting that some kind of cultural mutation is at work—especially in the young. It is a wonderful infection, and spreading fast.

If this seems a lot to say—or claim—in any context, we cannot help it. The support is all about. Take for example a volume just published by Basic Books ($5.95), *The Ways of the Will*, by Leslie H. Farber, who is a practicing psychiatrist and psychoanalyst of Washington, D.C. There is a quiet impersonality in this volume which becomes, in time, a rare strength for both reader and writer. If the book is science, it is science regarded from a bedrock depth of religion and philosophy; and this characterization need arouse no suspicion in the reader, who will not find himself invited into any sectarian escape-hatches. The temper of Dr. Farber's essays is distilled from an expression quoted from Kierkegaard:

> One must really have suffered very much in the world, and have been very unfortunate before there can be talk of beginning to love one's neighbor. It is only in dying to the joys and the happiness of the world in self-denial that the neighbor comes into existence. One cannot therefore accuse the immediate person of not loving his neighbor, because he is too happy for the "neighbor" to exist for him. No one who clings to earthly life loves his neighbor, that is to say his neighbor does not exist for him.

It is helpful, here, to change the Calvinist threat of this passage into the idea of a determination to go behind the self-deceptions of ordinary morality, the conceits of ordinary science, and to take down the defenses of ordinary ideas of role and achievement—to reach, that is, for a kind of self-knowledge which is absolutely sincere. This becomes possible only from growing despair in anything else—a quality which, when felt by others, cannot be oppressively moralistic.

Dr. Farber has his house of ideas where he lives and finds his tools but there is no breath of institutional authority in what he has to say. The book is a gentle but firm debunking of the image of the Psychoanalyst as one who Knows All. What finally emerges, instead, for the liberated reader, is a vast respect for men—some, at least—who have learned how to use the sagacity of long experience to help the sick in mind. You develop a similar respect by watching the work of a teacher who loves and understands children. Teaching means a delicate combination of reverence for, and knowledge of, other human beings, the knowledge being of a sort which never diminishes the capacity for affection or the expectation of good, although it prevents sentimental foolishness on either count. Of course, you can't really tell what is behind such qualities. It is impossible, that is, to give a genetic account of them. Neither can they be *willed* into being.

There is reassurance early in this book that Dr. Farber will not attempt to define the will, even though he has written persuasively on its "ways." As he says:

> . . . the subject of the will has never suffered abstraction gladly, proving most elusive when viewed most theoretically—or so it has seemed to me, in both my reading and my writing. I have come to believe increasingly that the vitality of the subject of will depends upon an intricate interplay between the general and the concrete. To the extent that I have realized such interplay, principles and phenomena will rely on each other for both their existence and their truth.

The book arose from a lifelong preoccupation with the problem or mystery of the will on the part of the author—an interest confirmed by a remark by Martin Buber, who once told the author that the profession of psychoanalysis needed above all

a psychology of the will. Dr. Farber's reflections on the subject are formed by the considerations in his second chapter, "The Two Realms of the Will." The first realm involves the philosophic direction, the basic orientation, of a man's life. It has to do with attitudes more than acts, underlying motives rather than specific intentions. The following paragraph clarifies the distinction between the two realms:

> The problem of will lies in our recurring temptation to apply the will of the second realm to those portions of life that not only will not comply, but that will become distorted under such coercion. Let me give a few examples: I can will knowledge, but not wisdom; going to bed, but not sleeping; eating, but not hunger; meekness, but not humility; scrupulosity, but not virtue; self-assertion or bravado, but not courage; lust, but not love; commiseration, but not sympathy; congratulations, but not admiration; religiosity, but not faith; reading, but not understanding. The list could be extended but it must be clear, when will of the second realm turns to such qualities, that it seeks in its own utilitarian way to capture through imitation their public face—the manner or style that is visible and objective, as well as available.

We said this book has a Taoistic quality. For comparison with the above, there are these verses from Lao-tse:

> It is the Way of Heaven not to strive, and yet it knows how to overcome; not to speak, and yet it knows how to gain a response; it calls not, and things come of themselves; it is slow to move, but excellent in its designs. . . .
>
> When the Great Tao falls into disuse, benevolence and righteousness come into vogue. When shrewdness and sagacity appear, great hypocrisy prevails. It is when the bonds of kinship are out of joint that filial piety and paternal affection begin. It is in a ferment of revolution that loyal patriots arise.

One could say that Dr. Farber shows in great psychological detail the consequences of the "disuse" of Tao, which in this case would be the failing awareness of a transcendental reality within human beings—the source of those visions and dignities which have their natural governance in the first realm of the will. He shows also how the second realm dispensed with will altogether, "motivation" being put in its place. Instead of explaining human action through the will, we look for an external determination, or a mechanistic psychological cause. Dr. Farber writes:

> Obviously, a psychology of will would not preclude psychic determinism, even though it might deprive determinism of some of the ill-gotten prerogatives it has acquired in this century. It is when motive is used as cause that it begins to usurp the will's domain and at the same time defeat the phenomenological venture. If, out of envy, I will to disparage, I still have the option of willing not to disparage. So far as I know, no such option occurs in disparagement whose cause is envy. The determination relevant to these considerations seems more a professional tic, peculiar to psychotherapists, and might more accurately be called the compulsion or will toward causality that constructs, inventing in its own image, other wills called motives.

Dr. Farber's general view is this:

> The problem may be briefly put in this manner: *without a clear and explicit conception of the will as responsible mover, we tend to smuggle will into our psychological systems under other names—this contraband will being usually an irresponsible mover of our lives.* A corollary to this proposition is: *when particular aspects of our will-less system are asked to become or include will, the existential or phenomenological relevance of these aspects is diminished.*

Which is a way of explaining why there are so many shrunken men.

Pursuing the meanings behind the concept of "anxiety," Dr. Farber shows that this idea is therapeutically useless when regarded as a "cause." Intelligently willed action may come in spite of anxiety, but not because of it. To illustrate this view there is an intensely interesting account of the author's encounter with Harry Stack Sullivan, who used the young doctor's anxiety to press him to self-discovery. Yet the anxiety was not itself the "cause" of the light which came:

> It follows that to characterize the nature of my encounter with Sullivan as mere anxiety would do it phenomenological injustice. At the same time, to

> abstract anxiety for theoretical purposes as the psychological mover toward either constriction or enlightenment would be equally fallacious. Anxiety may be an ache which cries for relief, but whether or what relief will occur cannot be a result of anxiety's decision. Unlike the will anxiety must be considered morally (or psychologically) *inert*, which is to say that, whether good or evil follows, anxiety will depend on forces other than anxiety. . . Much as I dislike this game of labels, my preference, which could be anticipated, would be to ca11 this the "Age of the Disordered Will." . . . If anxiety is more prominent in our time, such anxiety is the product of our particular modern disability of the will. To this disability, rather than to anxiety, I would attribute the ever-increasing dependence on drugs affecting all levels of our society. While drugs do offer a relief from anxiety, their more important task is to offer the illusion of healing the split between the will and its refractory object. The resulting feeling of wholeness may not be a responsible one, but at least within that wholeness—no matter how willful the drugged state may appear to an outsider—there seems to be, briefly and subjectively, a responsible and vigorous will. This is the reason, I believe, that the addictive possibilities of the age are so enormous.

Connecting this analysis with the feverish activism of technology, Dr. Farber remarks that "utilitarian opportunities for this more self-conscious will are vast in this technological age; in fact, it could be said that our technology could not have been accomplished without it." What, at root, is lacking? The sense of the need for philosophizing would be one way to put it. The attempt to solve our existential problems by "willing" them away is, as Yeats said, "the will trying to do the work of the imagination." The long-term effect of this denial of the role and rights of the inner man is that "the private voice of subjectivity and the public occasions from life that might raise this voice are almost stifled if not silenced." There is atrophy of the moral intelligence.

There is a respectful but searching inquiry into the responsibility of Freud for the loss of the subject in psychoanalytical theory, and a chapter on sex which will shock—it is intended to shock, after the fashion of Swift's *Modest Proposal*—all but very tough-minded readers. But what remains, after finishing the book, is the sense of having met a man who is compassionately devoted to the common ills of the vast majority of the people of his time. If the book has flaws, these are mainly the result of Dr. Farber's occupation—he has been told too many nasty little secrets, causing a tired pain he cannot quite conceal.

COMMENTARY
THE SPACE OF FREEDOM

IT seems worth while to try to expand on Yeats' idea of making the will "do the work of the imagination." (See Review, page 8.) To feel shrunken and inadequate is a common problem, these days; so, as Dr. Farber says, there is a common temptation to "will" to be otherwise. We admire the qualities of an inwardly rich human being and try to "imitate" them. The activist will "seeks in its own utilitarian way to capture through imitation their public face—the manner or style that is visible and objective, as well as available."

But it doesn't work. It doesn't work because these qualities belong to the existential ground. They are not "productions" at all, but are recognized by clearing away the rubbish of false identity. One learns contentment with what one *is*, instead of trying to manufacture a new, different, or more likeable self.

It is of interest, too, that Dr. Farber says that our "utilitarian" approach—one could add, our "political" approach; as someone, possibly de Tocqueville, remarked, we are a nation of lawyers—has itself created the "technological age." We are really product-obsessed because of the wild rush to fill the existential vacuum.

The fundamental diagnosis comes from Yeats: the existential vacuum can be filled only by works of the imagination. There are no technological or political surrogates for individual use of the imagination. Learning how to be is different from learning how to *do*. Only by use of the imagination can we learn how to create the space of freedom.

This is the law of life which unites art and philosophy. Art, you could say, is precious because it affords secular, non-moralistic instruction in the secrets of philosophy. Of course, if you don't go on and practice philosophy after having learned it from art, culture is turned into a collection of competing cults and coteries, and all the afflictions of an acquisitive, cash-in civilization infect the arts. Private "academic" vocabularies develop, making inevitable the practical alienations that the Bauhaus set out to correct. In fact, one of the fascinating things about the Bauhaus is its profound philosophical efflorescence, and the uncompromising spirit it developed in the teachers, who saw so clearly what was wrong with the society for which they worked. The Bauhaus was a dramatic demonstration of the therapeutic role of the imagination in human life.

CHILDREN
. . . and Ourselves
A FOURTH OF A NATION

NOT many books attempt the difficult task of surveying the entire field of public education in the United States, and fewer still attain to the usefulness which may be recognized in Paul Woodring's *A Fourth of a Nation* (McGraw-Hill, 1957). The import of the title is that the more than forty million students enrolled in schools and colleges represent the most important single unsolved problem confronting the people of the United States. The author, a teacher for most of his life, and presently a consultant to the (Ford Foundation) Fund for the Advancement of Education, is a temperate but insistent critic. He discusses with understanding the broad trends in American education, stating sympathetically as well as critically the contentions of the Classicists, the Progressives, and of the more recent attempts to restore the virtues of a General Education to the schools of the country.

For an understanding of the classical view, Crane Brinton is made the spokesman:

> To put the matter simply [Brinton wrote in *Ideas and Men*], a Greek man of letters like Aristophanes, or a Greek philosopher like Plato, if miraculously brought to earth in the mid-twentieth century and given speech with us (but no knowledge since his death,) could quite soon talk about literature or philosophy with a G. B. Shaw or a John Dewey, and feel quite at home; a Greek scientist like Archimedes in the same position would, even though he were a genius, need to spend a good many days grinding over elementary and advanced textbooks of physics and acquiring enough mathematics before he could begin to talk shop with a modern physicist like Bohr or Einstein. . . .
>
> This distinction between cumulative and non-cumulative knowledge is useful and obvious, which is about all we need to expect from a distinction. *Such distinction does not mean that science is good and useful, and that art and literature are bad and useless, but merely that in respect to the attribute of cumulativeness they are different.*

While the Classical-Liberal-General-Humanities idea of education has many advocates, its content cannot be "organized" in the way that the cumulative material of science can, and excellence in the disciplines of the Humanities is not easily measured. There is a natural tendency, therefore, for only lip-service to be paid to its ideal. Further, the quality of the teacher is crucial, where "wisdom" is implicitly intended to be the communicated value. As Woodring says, "when taught by a poor teacher, the classics can disintegrate into a meaningless recitation of memorized facts." Moreover, knowledge which can be quantified offers an attractive escape from teaching responsibility. It is certainly easier to transmit measurable information and then test for its accumulation in the mind of the student, than to arouse the imaginative and critical powers of students, especially if the teacher is neither imaginative nor critical himself. A later comment by Prof. Woodring bears on this aspect of the problem:

> There is little danger that a country that needs a million teachers and which pays them much less than members of other professions will have teachers who are "too intelligent." There is a great deal of danger that it will have many teachers who are not intelligent enough. . . .
>
> Intelligence, scholarship, and intellectual inclination are not the same thing, although the three are positively correlated and school administrators should look for all three in selecting teachers. In a society as anti-intellectual as ours, there is little danger that our teachers will lean too far in a scholarly direction; there is much greater danger that the students who might become our intellectual leaders will pass through the schools without encountering the teachers who can give them encouragement and help in the development of their own unique capacities.
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> I have looked up the college records of some of the principals who are reported to prefer teachers of mediocre scholarship and though my sample is small, I have found without exception they are individuals whose own college records give evidence of mediocre intelligence, poor scholarship, or both.
>
> One may suspect that these principals are uncomfortable in the presence of teachers brighter

> than they. It appears that if school boards wish to employ teachers of first-rate intellectual ability, they must first select superintendents and principals who have the confidence and outlook of men who are themselves both intelligent and scholarly as well as being skillful administrators.

There is similar diagnosis of the weaker liberal arts colleges:

> A college cannot be judged by its endowment or its annual income alone, and some have managed to provide good liberal education for a time with very little money. But in a society which values money as much as ours does, it would be foolish to suppose that a college unable to pay its faculty a living wage can long keep a good teaching staff or that it can provide good education without it. As the faculty deteriorates, the sense of purpose is lost and liberal education deteriorates. Unless something is done and done soon, it seems likely that half our private liberal arts colleges will suffer so drastic a loss of quality that they ought not to continue to try to prepare students for teaching or any other profession that requires a liberal education.

What is needed, it seems apparent, is a private, "evangelical" approach to this problem, instead of systems analysis and solutions. The systems approach leads directly to fund-raising campaigns in behalf of the survival of the small liberal arts college—such as we have all been exposed to recently—instead of attempts to create a better understanding of the value and importance of the Humanities. The Great Books study groups inaugurated through the efforts of Robert M. Hutchins have probably had more to do with the present-day understanding of a General Education than any other cultural stimulus. No doubt the money is needed, but we cannot ever "buy" what we are after in education. Love of truth, respect for learning, recognition of the crucial importance of those powers of mind which are generated through the disciplines of the non-cumulative studies, will make the funds needed come in the right way—not as grudgingly given conscience-money to pay for neglect of the institutional *symbols* of a wisdom neither understood nor possessed by the donors. Quite possibly, those institutions ought to die out, and new ones be reborn, to be shaped by the ardor of humanistic discovery.

It seems entirely possible that the General Education of tomorrow will be fabricated from enthusiasm for the new theory of knowledge that is emerging in the contemporary writings of men like Michael Polanyi, J. Bronowski, and A. H. Maslow—scientists who grasp the realities of self-knowledge at a level before the cumulative/non-cumulative (science/humanities) dichotomy has taken place, and who are fitted, therefore, to plan an education which is not torn by self-contradiction and bandaged with imitative pieties. But such a renaissance will hardly come from tinkering with the vast institutional apparatus of modern education. Like other great changes in the values and activities of human beings, it will result from new beginnings outside the conventional *status quo.* There will have to be free pilot projects, instead of desperate attempts to reform the highly organized educational bureaucracies which have ensconced in power the practitioners of a safe mediocrity. The big institutions can no doubt be modified by the efforts of inspired leaders—but this happens most effectively in the classroom through the work of individual teachers, often those fired by innovators who have set an example elsewhere. Books and articles by teachers show that this is already going on—has, of course, always gone on. These teachers need the freedom that the philanthropists of our affluent society could easily give them, and such help would vastly hasten the reform in education which everyone admits has got to take place. It must be recognized that theorists cannot do much to change a situation which is improved only by the inventive modelling of individuals. Theorists and wise analysts of the stature of Prof. Woodring can do little more than expose to view the dilemmas of modern education.

FRONTIERS

Secret Agent Etiquette

MOST of us are pretty complacent about the possibility of ever having a head-on meeting with a *secret agent.* We see them quite a lot on TV and know that what used to be an unsavory sort of person is now the action-man and un-hero of our times. They live another life than ours and unless you rob Brinks, bring peyote over the border, or violate the Mann Act, you don't get to have any experience with the FBI or the RCMP or the CID or the GPU, or any of the other alphabetical secret agencies around the world.

I have lived almost forty-five years without having the slightest opportunity for confrontation with a secret agent. I hadn't given the possibility much thought one way or the other, so when it happened, I was totally unprepared.

Tired out, one afternoon, from picking raspberries and canning them, I lay on the couch looking at a magazine, and dozed off. I was awakened by a car which came into the yard and stopped. I got up and walked to the door. Two men were approaching, one with a small bag. I thought to myself, I'm *not* going to listen to another JW lecture; I'll tell them they've already been by for this year. But I didn't get the chance.

One of the men said: "Mrs. Naeve?" I naturally said yes. It was the wrong answer. In a few seconds they were on the porch, flashing their wallets and badges just like in the movies. Bewildered, I said, "If you say you are agents, then I guess you are. I don't need to see the badges to believe you."

Now what do you say to a secret agent when you've broken no laws, done nothing suspicious, and are only trying to live a decent, ordinary life? (Of course, I had the misfortune of having birthed two male children in the wrong country, one of whom is now of draft age.)

You don't have to worry about there being questions. They come equipped with plenty. In fact, you ought to have some ready yourself. They seem to get muddled if you question the morality of what they are doing and add that they are invading your privacy. When you reverse on them this way they explain that they aren't supposed to get personally involved. They only come to ask questions.

These particular agents were on my porch because they had received a note from the FBI requesting them to ask my son five questions. They got me by mistake. So I asked them: "Is every country a person emigrates *from* allowed to influence the Mounties to question its former citizens?" Aren't the emigration forms people fill out and sign sufficient answer for all such matters? Why should it be possible to pursue people all over the world, through the secret police, asking questions that aren't necessary and involve moral issues?

I asked these agents if they happened to be French-Canadian. They both said yes. Then I asked them if they personally approved of the mess going on in the foreign policies of the U.S. (After all, being of French origin, they knew something about what had happened to France in Vietnam.) "You are getting us away from what we came for," they said. "Our job doesn't allow us to give personal opinions." Then one of the men said, "Well, I have to have a job."

While they stood in the doorway it occurred to me that the brief case one of them clutched so carefully might contain a tape recorder. I dismissed this as just too James Bondish and silly. I wanted to ask him to leave it outside but then I thought it was ridiculous to assume it was a recorder. One of them was embarrassed and tried to be nice. But the other man continued to press for the answers to the five questions the FBI wanted.

I looked past them at their car. It was a late model. One agent was dressed in a spotless, dark suit. He wore a white shirt with large cuff-links and very pointed, highly polished, black shoes. *He* had to have a job. The other agent wore casual clothing. I said that I felt sorry that they had to do other people's messy jobs and that the FBI ought to conduct its own dirty business. That of course unfurled a patriotic discourse on the inviolable rights of Canadian citizens, to the effect that no FBI agent could touch Canadian soil without permission. (One

did last summer, in the British Columbia area, harassing a woman about getting her son to return to the U.S. She reported this to the newspapers and considerable ire rose on the Canadian side. I knew all this and only said what I did to needle them a bit.)

After telling them at least five times that they were invading my privacy and after their saying at least five times that they wished I would "cooperate," they left with four unasked and unanswered questions. The pleasanter of the two, pausing as he got into the car, said: "Well, if we ever have occasion to come again, I guess we won't have to be afraid of your meeting us with a gun!"

When one evening I told some friends about this visit from the Mounties, a mild vegetarian said that the barn where we were then living offered sufficient "deterrents" if the Mounties ever came again. I could meet them with an iron rod (farm tool) in one hand, a scythe in the other, and I could have handy a large fish net, a baseball bat, and a useless 22 rifle we had to kill the porcupines which chewed at our foundation.

I think the best weapon would be a sense of humor.

But when I hear our dog whine it occurs to me that a sign might do the job: DOG THAT BITES—COME AT YOUR OWN RISK. The trouble is our dog is so friendly that we almost had to teach her to bark. In the first seven months we had her I don't think she ever barked, and it would have been handy to know when she wanted to come in or go out. (And now to know when the Mounties are coming!) A friend was so annoyed during hunting season by men shooting every which way that she was afraid to go out of the house except after dark, so she put up a sign that read that way. She was never bothered again. (I don't think she had a dog.)

Well, the Mounties did come again, but in between the two visits a popular Canadian magazine came out with an editorial which had this title: "Dear RCMP: DRAFTDODGERS ARE REFUGEES, NOT CRIMINALS.

One morning after the children had gone to school and there was no one else to help finish nailing the fiberboard on the new house we are building, I went to work with Lowell. I was trying to nail straight and was just getting the hang of it when I noticed the car pull into our drive. I took one look and saw it was *those* guys. I called to Lowell: "It's the Mounties!" When they got out of their car I moaned, *Not again*, and rapidly went back to nailing. They moseyed up, sort of friendly, but they saw my gloomy look. They mumbled that they guessed Mrs. Naeve wasn't too happy about seeing them. Before they could get to talking Lowell leaned out of the framework of a window hole and asked:

"Have I done anything wrong?"

Both men looked sort of surprised and shook their heads, "No."

"Then what the hell are you doing here?"

Well, we talked with them about separatism in Quebec. This time they said they thought Vietnam was a *mess.* There was a little gossip about how the FBI expected them to find Canadian deserters from the American army—young Canadians who had crossed the line and enlisted and then changed their minds (ha-ha) about being sent off to Vietnam and skipped home. That was about all.

As the Mounties were driving away Lowell called out to them: "Come by some time with your wives for a social call." It wasn't until that evening that both of us realized that the Mounties never did get around to the questions that they had come to ask.

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