



## Notes on Educational Reform

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Keeping in touch with efforts at educational reform in American universities has become increasingly difficult. Several years ago only a few pacesetter institutions were experimenting with interdisciplinary courses, field study programs, student-initiated courses, and independent study in their undergraduate programs. But today these innovations have spread throughout academia in response to changed faculty attitudes and the newer youth subcultures.<sup>1</sup> Exceptional places like St. John's Colleges at Annapolis and Santa Fe fight a continuing engagement in defense of traditional curricula resting on a program of Great Books which must be accepted in its entirety. However, elsewhere students as well as faculty, who have been in constant communication with each other, have helped to spread experiments begun in one locale all over the academic map—generally with the consequence of minimizing the traditional curricular requirements or eliminating them altogether.

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<sup>1</sup> Both the sheer magnitude of change and the degree to which it may promote homogeneity are suggested by Harold L. Hodgkinson, *Institutions in Transition: A Study of Change in Higher Education*, a publication of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1970; for discussion of change in some pioneering liberal arts colleges, see Morris Keeton and Conrad Hilberry, *Struggle and Promise: A Future for Colleges* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969).

Understandably, educational reform is intertwined with other issues: for instance, with the attack on science as stultifying, "irrelevant," or dangerous to mankind; with programs in black studies or in urban studies which often have the highest priority on a campus, frequently with the aim [194] of doing something about white racism or ghetto poverty. In many colleges the proponents of participatory educational democracy—carrying into (more or less) voluntary associations the national principle of "one man, one vote"—contend that participation per se is a more important reform than any substantive changes in styles of teaching and learning. Correspondingly, whatever else may be happening on a campus, a drastic delegitimation of authority is proceeding, whether this be the authority of experts or professionals, of curricular programs, or of traditions of scholarship and learning. In the place of the older authority there has arisen what Erich Fromm in *Escape from Freedom* and *Man for Himself* described as anonymous authority: the authority of whatever is denned as relevant and consonant with an epoch of rapid social change, in short, with whatever extracurricular preoccupations students and faculty now press upon their institutions.

Though I do not agree with Erich Fromm in some of his specific comments on education to-



day, notably in connection with Summerhill, I believe that the implications of his general thought for the understanding of education are very important. My own thinking about education and my work over many years as an educational reformer are the beneficiaries of Erich Fromm's work and example. For instance, the distinction he makes between rational and irrational authority, analogous to the one he draws between rational and irrational affects, is helpful to me when I reflect on the present battle over authority in higher education.<sup>2</sup> When he first made his distinction between rational and irrational affects—thus arguing that there can be rational love and rational hate—the intellectual climate tended to regard rationality as affect-free (and therefore, as good and trustworthy); while we move unevenly into an era which regards irrationality as life-giving and rationality as merely a hang-up, the distinction, with values reversed, remains.<sup>3</sup> Fromm's thought is syncretic, not only with respect [195] to this ancient dualism of thought and feeling, but also with respect to the differences among the great world religions and such civil (or nonreligious) religions as patriotism, socialism, or humanism. Characteristic also is his insistence that the past should not be junked (an almost impossible effort in any

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<sup>2</sup> Many social critics, when they encounter what they regard as excesses of reason, are tempted to turn against reason itself and to defend irrationality as somehow more deeply human. Fromm's distinction preserves reason as essentially human, undercutting the despair that leads to praising irrationality per se. Cf. the candid, troubled discussion in George P. Elliott, "Revolution Instead—Notes on Passions and Politics," an essay principally concerning education, *The Public Interest*, 20 (1970), 65-89, especially pp. 85 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The distinction is not a simple one, and there is no space here fully to explore Fromm's meaning. He considers rational those affects which are conducive to the optimal functioning of human beings, to the growth and unfolding of life; irrational affects are those which diminish or weaken the capacity for the art of life. Love might then be rational if not based on masochism or possessiveness. Hatred would generally be irrational, markedly so when it is of an idling kind, as in an idling motor, waiting for targets of opportunity—but arguably rational when reactive to a specific threat to life. Whether an affect is rational or not says nothing about its comprehensibility through reason: both alike can be in principle understood.

event) even while one tries to move toward a more hopeful future; thus he has recently written: "For many of the younger generation who belittle the value of traditional thought, I should like to stress my conviction that even the most radical development must have its continuity with the past; that we cannot progress by throwing away the best achievements of the human mind—and that to be young is not enough!"<sup>4</sup>

Beyond such conceptual clarifications, his influence has led me in my thinking about education and teaching to appreciate the importance of moral qualities in the scholar and teacher. Just as he asks investigators in scientific research to be open to observation and impressions and hunches, so also he argues in teaching and in psychoanalysis for openness that lessens defensiveness and the need to impress others. Contrary to the ideology of many Americans, perhaps especially males, he stresses the importance of vulnerability as one of the qualities of humaneness.<sup>5</sup> While I know that in dealing with sullen or actively hostile students my own resiliency leaves much to be desired and my good humor often deserts me, Fromm's model of unsentimental vulnerability is something I try to attain. Generally speaking, he sees the importance for creative intellectual work of such moral qualities as this, as well as courage and faith; intelligence unanchored in the affective life is not enough. Indeed, I have observed that it is the cultivation of these moral qualities which often makes the difference between interesting, potentially significant work, and conventional academic gamesmanship. (Needless to say, gamesmanship can take many forms: increasingly it takes the form of desire to shock and to appear properly rebellious, a member of what Harold Rosenberg once termed "the herd of independent minds.") [196]

### Current Themes of Educational Reform

During the academic year 1968-1969, while on

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<sup>4</sup> See Erich Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope: Toward a Humanized Technology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), Foreword, p. xvii.

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 85 and elsewhere.



leave from Harvard, I had the opportunity to discuss ideas and ideals of educational change and reform with students and faculty at a number of places widely differing from each other: Stanford University (then engaged in a large self-study); the University of California at Davis and at San Diego; the University of North Carolina (where the first two undergraduate years were being examined by a student-faculty committee); the new College of the State University of New York at Old Westbury which had just opened that year; Oakland University in Michigan; and, more briefly, Pitzer College in the Claremont group of colleges. In addition, I perused the student press at a number of colleges and followed the discussions of reform in the educational journals. I have already indicated the similarity of concerns that one meets from coast to coast. Everywhere one encounters the desire for a more egalitarian university. Meritocratic distinctions are under attack and so is the apparatus of grades, course prerequisites, and selective admissions. One often finds encounter groups or sensitivity training sessions praised as the optimal situations for learning, in part on the ground that faculty authority and expertness could be reduced and true mutuality encouraged. While some encounter groups do succeed in opening people up to themselves and others, at times intrusively and at other times with greater care and tact, there may be a general tendency to focus on the intrapsychic in such settings. But one also finds a widespread effort to get students and faculty out into field situations, such as community organizing or experiments in communal living.<sup>6</sup> The range of field settings that is envisaged is likely to be narrow: pockets of poverty, inner-city ghettos, the exotic and the deprived; less often will students involve themselves in the life of a church, a

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<sup>6</sup> Of course, I am not implying that learning could not occur in field settings! I do my best to encourage my own students to do manageable pieces of empirical work, for instance some enterprise of participant-observation or a small-scale interview study. However, many newly developed programs that boast of putting students out into the field do not provide the kind of preparation that a good anthropology department would. For further note on encounter groups, see footnote 20.

business corporation, or a small town.

In all these areas, the trend is away from what is regarded as alienated learning and toward first-hand experience. An amateur spirit prevails, which has its benign sides but also certain dangers. There is a frequent belief that theoretical work gets in the way of experience: a naive [197] underestimation of the epistemological problems of experience itself. Related to this on many campuses is a rejection of rationalism and of the search for objectivity in scholarship, an attitude which identifies spontaneity with irrationality and regards cognition as necessarily deadening, and the effort to categorize as a sign of necrophilic tendencies. This view finds support in the various drug subcultures on the campus, as well as in the continuing attack on research as a sophisticated support for the status quo, and thus for war. If one asks students of this persuasion why they wish to be in the university at all, apart from the imperatives imposed by the draft, they will sometimes say that this is where their friends are, where they can be away from home, and where they can use the resources of the university as a base for their extramural activities.<sup>7</sup> These ideas of educational reform originated in the elite colleges and among articulate critics, and often had the support of the student press. But they have spread to many campuses in what were once provincial parts of the country, including the "provinces" of large cities, where most students are the first generation in their families to attend college.<sup>8</sup> The vocal students who have been the carriers of educational change are apt to be the more affluent, to be majoring in the humanities or the

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<sup>7</sup> The term "community" comes up constantly in these discussions: there is the academic community, the black community, the student community, etc. The term carries none of the tentativeness with which Erich Fromm speaks of the formation of Groups in the last chapter of *The Revolution of Hope* (pp. 158-162). There is instead in these discussions a naivete in assuming that people who share contiguous turf will have anything in common and that they already form a community rather than a series of competing barrios or fractionated sects.

<sup>8</sup> The same is true in the high schools. See *How Old Will You Be in 1984: Expressions of Student Critique from the High School Free Press*, Diane Divoky (ed.) (New York: Avon Books, 1969).



"softer" social sciences, and to be male and white.<sup>9</sup> These students contend that the educational system oppresses them, though [198] most are not so despairing as the violent activists who see in the university the symbol of "the corrupt society" and seek to stop its operations altogether. Nonetheless, even moderate student reformers and their faculty supporters share with antiuniversity activists an ignorance of the history of American higher education.<sup>10</sup> They are seldom aware of the irony that many in other industrial societies are seeking to incorporate the American practices now under attack in order to strengthen their own systems of higher education. This lack of historical knowledge helps sustain the mythology that American higher education was once uncorrupted by commercialism, careerism, or other worldly constraints.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Black students on the white campus may come together to demand Black Studies programs and greater "relevance" to the urban scene or to the problems of blacks; but in general, in my observation, they do not favor radical educational reform, but feel more secure with traditional "collegiate" structures both in the curriculum and the extracurriculum; they are often at odds with white radical students who, the blacks feel, can afford to dispense with universities whereas they, as members of a previously deprived group, need all the educational benefits they can get.

I know no coed campus where women have taken the leadership in educational reform, and I believe they suffer as blacks do from some of the current temptations of reformers, since the women need to make full use of their undergraduate years to establish quasi-professional competence if they are not to remain dependent on the chances and mischances of marriage and to have the opportunity to enter careers outside the prevailing range of "women's jobs." See David Riesman, "Observations on Contemporary College Students—Especially Women," *Interchange*, vol. 1, pp. 50-63.

<sup>10</sup> There are some notable exceptions. Thus, three years ago Ira Magaziner and Christopher Coles at Brown University compiled a massive dossier on educational reform; impressing many faculty members with their seriousness, they succeeded in many of their aims of loosening the curriculum, abandoning traditional grading, etc.

<sup>11</sup> The best historical work I know is that of Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Thorstein Veblen's *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by*

Many students, however, do read. When I have asked them what books have influenced their ideas of educational change, they mention the writings of John Holt, George Leonard (*Education and Ecstasy*), Herbert Marcuse, Norman O. Brown, A. S. Neill, Edgar Friedenberg, Paul Goodman, and a number of others.<sup>12</sup> The students draw from this body of literature a critique of prevailing educational practice and particularly an attack on the research-oriented university as run for the benefit of the faculty and not of the undergraduates. And their reading leads many to suppose that there are no problems of scarcity, either of talented teachers or of other human resources; the faculty are seen as willfully refusing to teach, and the society is sometimes seen as willfully insisting on dehydrated and irrelevant learning.<sup>13</sup> [199]

Many faculty members, and not only the younger products of the graduate schools, agree with these condemnations. Bored by their own research in many cases, excited by the cultural revolution, eager to identify with what seems to be youthful and energetic, they read into the student movement support for their own educational ideals. Students can also find in Fromm's

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*Businessmen* (New York: Viking Press, 1918) is a caustic account of Philistinism and seemly pedantry.

<sup>12</sup> A few mention the writings of Judson Jerome, Professor of Literature at Antioch College; see for instance, "Portrait of Three Experiments," in *Change 2* (July-August, 1970), 40-54, and other writings in that journal and *Life*. Some students draw from my own writings on education what I would regard as overgeneralized or misapplied conclusions. Thus, they scan Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1968) in order to find ammunition—there is plenty there!—to throw against the graduate schools and the hegemony of academic departments. (Others read the book, also too simplistically, as a complacent defense of the educational status quo.)

<sup>13</sup> There is a more somber note that occasionally crops up in the discussions I have had with students, especially on the more avantgarde campuses: this is an insistence that the heights of culture are in themselves an offense to the impoverished masses of the so-called Third World, and that the heights should be pulled down in the hope (a vain hope, in my judgment) of filling up the abysses. Sometimes the theme is explicit: if not everyone can share in the joys and illuminations of high culture, then no one should.



writings passages which support the way they view matters; consider the following from his contribution to a symposium on Summerhill School:

What is the student rebellion all about? The phenomenon is somewhat different within each country. In some, it represents socialist demands; in others, a fight for greater student participation in the deliberations and the decision-making of the university establishment. In these struggles, some groups have rejected violence; in others, various degrees of force have been employed. In some cases, institutional methods have been attacked; in others, particular individuals have been damned. Yet behind all these apparent differences, all the marching, sitting, and shouting students have something in common: *they are all experiencing a deep hunger for life*. They feel that their education is being bureaucratized, and that at best, they are being sufficiently prepared to enable them to earn a good living. But paramountly, they also feel they are not being offered stimulating intellectual food in large enough portions to enhance their sense of aliveness. These students insist that they do not want to be dead in the midst of plenty; they insist that they do not want to study in institutions which, in their yielding to the vested interests of professors, administrators, and governmental forces, pay too little attention to their generation's need for a critical examination of today's conventional wisdom.

The campus rebels, even though sometimes misled through political naivete and lack of realism, and even though sometimes motivated by destructive drives, at least draw attention to the fact that today's processes of higher education are deemed unsatisfactory by a large number of the young element.

The educational failure of our high schools is even worse. By his very action, each drop-out casts a vote against the education he has [200] been receiving. Who would deny that juvenile delinquency is related to the failure of our educational sys-

tem to provide stimulation and meaning for our adolescents.<sup>14</sup>

The passage just quoted exhibits only one aspect of Fromm's thought concerning students and education. Furthermore, he might not make the same statement today. Taken as they stand, these remarks seem to me a considerable over-generalization. It is common for reformers to suppose that protesters largely share their agenda, especially if they say they do. The litany of attack on bureaucratized education and on the vested interests of academia got a good deal of its start among the campus rebels of the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in 1964-1965. But careful studies of the protesters show that they were more appreciative of their courses and their education and less critical, except for public relations purposes, than the inactive students; what originally led them into action was neither a demand for greater student participation in university affairs nor a search for "stimulating intellectual food," but the civil rights movement in the Bay Area and their desire to use the campus as a platform for it.<sup>15</sup> When, after the Movement began, a new Acting Chancellor (Martin Meyerson) came in who was quite open to change, asking students for suggestions about educational reform, hardly any responded.

Similarly, I regard it as an error to declare that each dropout can be seen principally as a vote against our high schools, although surely many are just that. Such a notion is likely in practice to lead the dedicated and idealistic high school teacher toward the pedagogic equivalent of therapeutic despair because it is a vast overestimation of the role of formal education as against the more compelling influences of the home and the street. The *Coleman Report* on

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<sup>14</sup> See Harold H. Hart, ed., *Summerhill: For and Against* (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 251-252.

<sup>15</sup> There is a large literature. See, e.g., Robert H. Somers, "The Mainsprings of the Rebellion: A Survey of Berkeley Students in November, 1964," in Seymour Martin Lipset and Sheldon S. Wolin (eds.), *The Berkeley Student Revolt: Facts and Interpretations* (New York: Doubleday-Anchor Books, 1965), pp. 530-558; see also the discussion in Nathan Glazer, *Remembering the Answers* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).



equality of educational opportunity suggests how little of the variance in educational outcomes can be explained in terms of school settings in comparison with home and family and peer settings.<sup>16</sup> [201] Many students and many teachers experience a deep hunger for life and many resist conventional notions of career and consumerism. But many in my observation, in rejecting what they see as mindless and puritanical work for meaningless ends, have relied on a countercultural repertoire which also turns out to be limited. Decency, ingenuity, sensitivity can often be found. But I see a fair amount of psychedelically tuned aliveness which, though sometimes angry, commonly turns sullen and despairing. Indeed, so rapidly do the student movements change their mood and style and so intermittent has been the interest in educational reform (as distinguished from reforms in governance and politics) that it is hard to know what the impact has been on the great majority of uninvolved students, or what the consequences have been for the majority of uninvolved faculty.

Were Fromm writing about the student movements today he might well put even greater emphasis on destructive drives than appears in the quotation above. Indeed, toward the close of his contribution to *Summerhill: For and Against* he writes very critically:

And then there are many of the young who believe that freedom means absence of tradition, absence of structure, absence of plan: what is desirable is unstructured, spontaneous action. They often believe that "the old ideas" and values are of little or no use today, that to know tradition, not to speak of accepting some of it, is in itself an obstacle to freedom.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For a full discussion, see Christopher Jencks, "The Coleman Report and the Conventional Wisdom," prepared for *On Equality of Educational Opportunity*, Frederick Mosteller and Daniel P. Moynihan (eds.), to be published by Random House.

<sup>17</sup> One can hear this expressed in a very primitive form by many young students; and also expressed in a veiled, highly sophisticated form, in the writings of H. Marcuse. [Cf. the critique of Herbert Marcuse in

Similarly, the Fromm who writes in *The Revolution of Hope* about the literacy campaigns of Professor Paolo Freire in Latin America would not be sympathetic to affluent white student radicals such as those I have heard say to black underprivileged students that, since the latter have a great oral tradition, they should not bother with "whitey's hang-up of writing" and other academic binds. Many students have missed Fromm's dichotomy, in his contribution to the Summerhill compendium, between order, which he regards as mechanical and dead, and structure, which he defines as the property of all living (and indeed, nonliving) things and as essential for growth and creativity.<sup>18</sup> [202]

In a recent discussion at Harvard with student educational reformers, I suggested that students could actually become more free by learning tangible skills and accomplishments, so that they might be able to do things and not continue to remain dependent. To counter this, one reflective student cited *Summerhill*, saying that it didn't matter if a student sat around for a year or so because eventually he might want to do something, and then he would do it under his own motivation and without pressure. Another student cited Erich Fromm to support his contention that contemporary social science consisted of a series of pigeonholes for compartmentalized disciplines which bear no relation to the problems of the great world.<sup>19</sup>

*The Revolution of Hope*, pp. 106-107, and the critique of relativism on pp. 87-88.]

<sup>18</sup> See *Summerhill: For and Against*, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-263; note also in Fromm's Foreword to A. S. Neill, *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1960), p. xvi, his emphasis on the importance of Neill's own extraordinary qualities as a caution against assuming that a school like Summerhill can be built anywhere, any day. On the peer pressures that may exist at Summerhill at the present time in the relative absence of adult controls, see the account by a visiting educator: Mary Keohane, "A. S. Neill: Latter-Day Dewey?" *Elementary School Journal*, 70 (1970), 401-410.

<sup>19</sup> Fromm is not always seen as an ally by critical students. An SDS leader at a state university, on being introduced to me, launched into a vehement attack on Fromm's "revisionism" of Karl Marx. This student said that Marx was lulling the bourgeoisie in his early hu-



What is evident to me in many discussions is an idealism about the way learning should go on which can find some support in Fromm's work. It is an idealism that tempts us to believe that we can get rid of all the mixtures of motives with which most of us live, and that then we can find our way to a purity of humane experience unmediated by ordinariness or routine. Any education is worthless which is in any degree compromised by imposed schedules or by the desire to win approval or to get into graduate school; and the fear of having a "corrupt" or impure motive leads to a great watchfulness rather like that of the Puritans. But unlike the Puritans, work is not therapeutic or seen as indicative of election: it is apt to be seen as repressive. Thus, this idealism appears in some students to lead to vacillation between self-contempt for not living up to the ideal and a somewhat passive waiting to be captured by some all-encompassing activity.

The ways in which such students scrutinize themselves and each other have been influenced by the popularization of psychoanalytic thought. For many young people it is one of the forms of debunking, along with a vulgar Marxism and an old-fashioned American cynicism. Many people today regard psychoanalysis as having demonstrated the primacy of the buried emotional life and the ways in which rationalizations masquerade as [203] reason. Things are never what they seem: they are always worse than they seem. Many students and faculty consider encounter groups as ideal settings for education because they supposedly get away from "excessive" cognitive emphases and formal relations and allow people of different ages and backgrounds to experience each other directly. These devotees are generally unfamiliar with Erich Fromm's insistence that what is repressed and what is evoked in a particular setting is not some pan-human flow of sex and aggression, but what a particular culture and a particular social character find no way to categorize or to

use.<sup>20</sup> Fromm is critical of the common notion that what is "real"—as in the expression "the real me"—is an underlying aggression or racism or rampant sexuality; in encounter groups it often happens that people manipulate their aggressions or, indeed, their sexuality, sometimes in fake humility in order to establish a new moral hegemony in which the most apparently candid come out on top. What then may be repressed is sensitivity of feeling, delicacy (or snobbery) of reactions to other people, since one would be made to feel guilty for such reactions.<sup>21</sup>

Many of the adult and student educational reformers have had expensive secondary and university educations (I include myself here) and start their critique from their own backgrounds of cultivation and literacy. Many have had an interest in ideas since childhood and could have managed to educate themselves in the absence of requirements. In talking in recent years with such reformers, I have recognized that many are aware that their own college careers are unlikely to be affected by their proposed reforms; they are seeking to be generous to their successors. Yet they may not fully appreciate how high is the platform on which they themselves are standing and how hard it is to reach if one comes from a family that is not only nonaffluent but also skeptical of ideas and of education [204] generally. The reformers' insouciance, though often antiletist in rhetoric, may paradoxically turn out to be a way of insuring some

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud* (New York: Pocket Books, 1962), chap. 9, "The Social Unconscious."

<sup>21</sup> I do not intend here to be making blanket statements about all encounter groups in all sorts of social strata and contexts. I am talking about liberal arts colleges where the manipulative tend to get involved with the shy. Consequences might be quite different among a group of older people of lower-middle class origin where everyone is inhibited, if not always shy. Furthermore, I do not speak out of personal experience with such groups, but out of observing instances on television, reading some of the literature, and talking with many devotees. The evangelism of some proponents of the movement reminds me of the similarities of some encounter groups, at the extreme, to Chinese thought reform sessions as described in Robert J. Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1961).

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manistic writings; these were purely propagandistic in intent; Fromm was robbing Marx of his toughness and turning him into a soft bourgeois romantic!



affluent students against downward social mobility.

Because these students come from families that have arrived, and, indeed, at times from professional and intellectual families, they are apt to say to themselves that they want to "be" rather than to "do." They have a point when they declare that America and perhaps the whole Western world have been undone by an excessive emphasis on performance and achievement, but given the populous world we inhabit, it is an ambivalent and complicated point. To reject competence will not help the Western world survive or become more humane. Sometimes I have asked such students whether they believed that there are any skills at all that their culture is justified in asking them to acquire, or whether in their own development there is any point up to which they believe that they need the counsel of adults in the matter of their own further education. Frequently, they don't think there is such a point.

The analogy sometimes offered me is the finding that neonates will, like other animals, know how to feed themselves properly, to find the right amount of salt and other nutriment, when faced with a choice of possible edibles. Similarly, the students claim that they will know what it is they want and need and that in due course they will provide it for themselves. At the extreme to which these students often push the issue, there is implicit here a denial of the concept of culture itself: a belief that people will grow up into some pan-human protoplasm able to communicate with other protoplasm without either the freedoms or the restraints of our cultural inheritance. The unanthropological and unhistorical nature of such a view is striking.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> In the discussion of educational constraints that harass them, students quite commonly attack the language requirements in colleges and graduate schools, and everywhere these are being abandoned. My response has sometimes been to say to the students that their criticism of the inadequacy of most language requirements is quite correct and that they should insist on a language-immersion program in Peace Corps style in which they will be exposed to another culture so intensely that they will for a period not be able even to swear or to make love in their mother tongue, and in which all aspects of the non-American

The rejection of competition with peers and of the old-fashioned mania for success has admirable features, but it is a common fallacy of student and faculty critics to lump together rivalry with others and what might be called competition with the *ding an sich*—with the damned [205] thingmanship of a violin, for example. Such students tend to wait to fall in love, as it were, with a topic or a vocation, just as Erich Fromm has noted in his writings that they wait to "fall" in love with another person, rather than making an active effort out of which a genuine relatedness might actually come.

### The Cultural Revolution: Authority Delegitimized

In pondering such discussions with students, I have kept looking for settings in which they are faced with an authority that cannot easily be personalized and, hence, where issues of fighting against fears of being dependent would be less likely to interfere with education. One example is the responsive reaction many students have to a coach of a non-big-time athletic sport whom they see as their ally in improving their skill or pleasure in the sport, even if he may also be critical of them for indolence and failure to practice. Another is the response of students performing in orchestras or chamber music groups, where the conductor may be seen as the transmitter of the imperatives imposed by the score, rather than as an authority in his own right (and, therefore, wrong). Of course, a coach or a conductor may exercise irrational authority and subordinate players to himself rather than to the rules of the game or to the score. Yet, at their best, musical groups get sorted out by competence so that the first violinist or solo French horn does not have to be elected or chosen by lot.<sup>23</sup>

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culture will be available to them from its high art to its vernacular slang or music. Students tend instantly to reject such a demanding alternative; no doubt many faculty would also.

<sup>23</sup> To be sure, such settings also come under student attack for their competitiveness and their insistence on equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome. Students tell me that in some schools which





Perhaps as late as 1967, one could still have said that students in the better colleges were seeking to perform well in regular academic terms because they did not really question the curriculum, and because even if they did, they wanted to be able to enter good graduate and professional schools.<sup>24</sup> Students were coming to a growing number of avant-garde [206] colleges with ever more precocious intellectual equipment. In the middle-1960s, college presidents of such institutions saw their task as a struggle to recruit college professors in a market extremely favorable to the latter. Few, if any, observers suspected that major institutions would by the end of the 1960s face financial bankruptcy, and more to the point here, moral delegitimation and loss of authority.

However, when in June, 1970, I attended the annual Institute for incoming college presidents run by the American Council on Education, most of the men and women in attendance were deeply troubled concerning the issue of legitimacy. They were aware that many state legislatures expected them to act like other corporate executives (or, rather, as the latter are in fantasy supposed to act) and to be able to control campus turmoil and to fire dissident or destructive faculty and students. Inside the institution, in contrast, they are supposed to be egalitarian and infinitely accessible, and they are constantly being told that they must maintain "dialogue," or that "better communications" are the answer to all conflicts of interest. Most shrink from the accusation of being authoritarian or highhanded. The distinction Erich Fromm makes in *Man for Himself* between rational and irra-

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recently had active madrigal and chamber orchestra groups, the only performed music that now prevails is that of the guitar, plucked and sung to in an untrained and casual way. And in some colleges of music and art, there are students who will insist that their creativity would be stunted if they had to submit to supervision and criticism—they declare that no one is entitled to evaluate them except themselves.

<sup>24</sup> At Harvard College, for example, the "gentleman's C" of the insouciant aristocrat was no longer an admired goal but a deprecated legacy. For a picture of Harvard College in this period, critical of its complacencies while aware of its advances, see McGeorge Bundy, "Were Those the Days?" in *Daedalus*, 99 (Summer, 1970), 531-567.

tional authority is almost impossible for them, as for many other Americans, to make—understandably, of course, when it involves their own conduct. And like most people, perhaps especially Americans, they consider it part of their job to be well liked as well as to be respected.

If authority is not to lie in themselves and their own behavior, does it then perhaps lie in the curriculum which has been handed down to them? Can they defend the curriculum even while recognizing its undeniable biases and limitations? A handful of the men and women at the Institute were of this persuasion, believing that in the prevailing vogue of irrationalism, they had to defend the authority of scholarship and of cultural traditions, even if the particular carriers of these traditions on their campuses are all too human, fallible in their pedantry, their vanity, their rationalism, and all the other sins charged over the centuries against scholarship. In being prepared to make such a defense, these presidents are only too well aware that they can readily be defeated and ousted, and they know that they will be attacked as reactionaries. An increasing number of presidents is taking quite a different road, namely, to form an alliance with radical young faculty and students in opposition to that segment of scholarly faculty who insist on the authority of the curriculum over students and of the academic professions and their standards over faculty members. The convictions of such presidents in favor of participatory democracy outweigh [207] such convictions as they have about the claims of scholarship or the importance of inherited cultural traditions. Indeed, within this small but growing group, many presidents, like many faculty, believe that to take any other position would be elitist—and the accusation of "elitism" has in many university circles become almost as damaging as the accusation of racism (the two are often interchangeable).

Increasingly, students and many faculty vehemently insist that lectures are by definition authoritarian and that they compel the listeners to be passive receptacles. In contrast, encounter groups or rap sessions are praised as active and participative. Yet it is a misjudgment to suppose that one can tell a priori what is active and what is passive. The assumption that listening to a lec-



ture or a concert is necessarily passive, while "rapping" is active, seems to derive from an old-fashioned American judgment about muscularity and strenuousness: ironically, a judgment voiced by many who regard themselves in politics and culture as "anti-American." In the absence of any effort to learn a skill or to discipline oneself in a cultural tradition, the new, more groovy forms of teaching and learning can become vehicles for that narcissism which, in *The Heart of Man*, Erich Fromm sees as endemic but redeemable.<sup>25</sup>

Some Personal (Perhaps Quixotic) Strategies in Undergraduate Education

In an earlier draft of this paper I examined some attempts at undergraduate educational innovation, briefly reviewing the two St. John's colleges at Annapolis and Santa Fe,<sup>26</sup> Shimer

College in Illinois, and [208] Bennington; I also discussed some ventures in setting up enclaves within major universities, notably the Experimental College at Berkeley.<sup>27</sup> The article grew much too long, and I decided to eliminate the detailed discussion of these experiments. Yet I want to emphasize a point I was making there, namely that any viable educational reform must be tied to its base of faculty and students and to the particular cultural context; it is thus (unlike pilot models in industry) not readily transferred to diverse sorts of institutions. What may be transferred is a mode of thinking about educational reform.

I can offer no solution, even a partial one, to the educational problems that beset us. The great social and cultural shifts of our time have unsettled educational institutions as they have unsettled the churches and many individual families. In such a fluid setting my own recommendations tend to be conservative. I am often asked about starting a new experimental college, and having observed a good many such colleges in recent years, my inclination is to say that in the present climate they are apt to attract both faculty and students who are visionaries with competing sectarian visions, and that one needs an extraordinarily firm leader to avoid disaster. As I have just said, I am more sympathetic to innovations within relatively stable settings. I have seen student-led courses which have been useful because of the particular group involved and their dedication; I have seen others turn into therapy sessions or rapidly disintegrate. I have seen some of the most hopeful innovations occur in denominational colleges, such as Immaculate Heart in Los Angeles or Florida Presbyterian in St. Petersburg, although such colleges are certainly not untroubled.

In general it seems to me wrong to tear

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<sup>25</sup> See Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil* (New York: Harper, 1964), chap. 4. See also, for a penetrating analysis of many of the issues dealt with in this paper—one which appeared after the text was written—Walter P. Metzger, "The Crisis of Academic Authority," in *Daedalus*, 99 (Summer, 1970), 568-608.

<sup>26</sup> In *The Revolution of Hope, op. cit.*, p. 115, Erich Fromm has a passing comment on such a program, speaking of "our college students [who] are literally 'fed up' because they are fed, not stimulated." He continues, "They are dissatisfied with the intellectual fare they get in most—although fortunately not in all—instances, and, in this mood, tend to discard all traditional writings, values, and ideas. It is futile simply to complain about this fact. One has to change its conditions, and this change can occur only if the split between emotional experience and thought is replaced by a new unity of heart and mind. This is not done by the method of reading the hundred great books—which is conventional and unimaginative. It can only be accomplished if the teachers themselves cease being bureaucrats hiding their own lack of aliveness behind their role of bureaucratic dispensers of knowledge; if they become—in a word, by Tolstoy—the co-disciples of their students." I think that indeed there are problems in the Great Books formula and that the textual analysis that colleges have built on that formula can become routinized. In discussions at both St. John's colleges, I have made similar criticisms. Nevertheless, the seriousness, even solemnity, with which students and faculty read and analyze the set texts can be a refreshing contrast to the many other small, experimental liberal arts colleges where the students principally spend their time on pot and each other. I am prepared to defend the two St. John's col-

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leges, despite my criticisms, until I see a number of better models around.

<sup>27</sup> See Joseph Tussman, *Experiment at Berkeley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969); for Shimer as it was in an earlier day, see Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, "Shimer College," *Phi Delta Kappan* (April, 1962), pp. 415-420; and more generally, David Riesman, Joseph Gusfield, and Zelda Gamson, *Academic Values and Mass Education* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1970).



down given educational structures and curricula, no matter how inadequate, unless one has something [209] better to put in their place. The attack on arbitrary custom and inherited tradition, in education as in other spheres of life, has gained an extraordinary momentum in our time. One approach is to insist that schools and colleges are inherently stultifying, "total institutions," and that young people would be better off without them. Another approach is to set against the existing institutions the vision of new ones, which would be staffed by wholly devoted, wholly empathic teacher-learners, not committed either to the political or the pedagogic status quo. However, proponents of the counterculture tend to oppose institutions as such, and to believe that free-form education requires no planning, no organization.

In our secondary schools and our colleges, there are many demoralized instructors who realize that the reforms of which they are capable seem miniscule in the face of a cultural revolution whose sources lie in large measure outside the schools, and which has the support of the highbrow centers with their sympathy for Dionysian styles of life. That sympathy is now to some degree being carried into the secondary schools by young teachers who are themselves the products of permissive private or luxuriant public schools and for whom rigid order and necessary structure are not distinguishable from each other: they oppose both. Naturally, what has been said just now can readily become an alibi for complacency; one has to examine the social context before coming to a decision as to the appropriateness and the tone of criticisms. Since a system of higher education with 600,000 faculty members and seven million students is not capable of making quantum jumps, the effort at instant transformation will bring chaos rather than creativity.

We are presently moving from a system of mass higher education in which half the age-grade goes beyond high school to some form of college and in which enrollments more than doubled between 1960 and 1970, to a system of near universal higher education up to the fourteenth grade. Our problems would be somewhat less grave if it became general practice after high school to enter on a period of employ-

ment or of voluntary service and to rely on adult education rather than on an automatic assumption of post-secondary education for many students who are neither mature enough nor eager enough to profit from college. The majority of these students are pursuing vocational or preprofessional curricula which will lift them socially from blue collar to (often more poorly paid) white collar work;<sup>28</sup> the status of students, their families, and their prospective [210] occupations (along with the draft) all press in the direction of college. For most of these "first-generation" students, college is seen as a somewhat less boring option than its alternatives, and the programs and prospects for educational reform seldom come from them. Intensive teaching and advising might in some cases help such students redefine their aims while they are in college without necessarily pulling them away from attainable post-college goals. Just this occurs in some fortunate encounters. But while such colleges often have devoted teachers and hard-working counselors, the matching between these and any particular student is usually fairly accidental. The advice such students get often depends on the tilt of the curriculum and the everpresent grapevine.

In more favored settings with carefully selected student bodies and the cushion of private endowments, I am inclined to think that it makes sense to shift resources toward more intensive advising, even at the expense of course work. I have in mind here Erich Fromm's comment in *The Revolution of Hope*,<sup>29</sup> already quoted, concerning the futility of complaining about student dissatisfaction and the need for faculty members to become, in his term, "vulnerable," and responsive to student interests. By "vulnerable" I do not mean "apologetic." Many students are capable litigants and rhetoricians, used since childhood to discovering and exploit-

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<sup>28</sup> The decline of blue-collar work that was assumed to follow upon the rise of automation has been greatly exaggerated. See Robert S. Weiss, David Riesman, and Edwin Harwood, "Work and Automation: Problems and Prospects," in Robert K. Merton and Robert A. Nisbet (eds.), *Contemporary Social Problems*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1971), pp. 545-600.

<sup>29</sup> *Op.cit.*, p. 115.



ing adult weaknesses. What I have in mind is the openness to listen to a student in order to catch the latter's concerns and preoccupations as possible foci for more systematic learning and exploration. "Vulnerability" may also mean recognizing how threatened one is by student antagonism and attack without having to suppress these reactions to appear to oneself impregnable and unaffected. Vulnerability might require a decision that other faculty members, less threatened in this particular way, could be more help to particular students. At the same time a college of modest size whose faculty took seriously the demanding enterprise of teaching would also need to ask itself how students could be helped to become more vulnerable, more open to an awareness of their limitations as well as their strengths.

Given the narcissism that leads many students to play always from their strengths and to conceal what they regard as their weaknesses, I am not sure that many could be persuaded to listen to a faculty adviser in a [211] one-to-one discussion on the uses they might make of a curriculum. Yet I would like to see them asked to take part in an assessment of their capacities in a variety of areas of cognitive and emotional functioning, so that they would confront areas they had previously protected themselves from. The aim here would be less to make them "well rounded" in some abstract and standardized sense than to encourage them to develop their potentialities and to discover new modes of enjoying their own activity. If students were simultaneously given the chance to continue in areas of achieved competence, they might better be able to endure seasons or areas of vulnerability. Such an adviser might help students focus on their possible career aspirations, and I would like to see many begin at once as freshmen on a professional program studied in a broad, liberal way. (I recognize the bias against preprofessional education prevailing among both elite college faculties and their students; however, much education in the liberal arts is actually preparation for a career of an academic or literary sort, and need not in fact be "liberal" in the sense of emancipating, whereas preprofessional work in medicine or engineering or law does not have to be narrow.)

Ideally, the adviser would help students become aware of ways in which they can learn from educational settings previously denned as utterly dismal or boring. Especially today, when there is such an animus against all large and allegedly impersonal milieus, students need to learn how to listen to lectures with what in *The Revolution of Hope* Erich Fromm terms "activeness," mixing their own thought with that of the lecturer and attending to what the anthropologist Edward Hall calls "the silent language" as well to the spoken words.<sup>30</sup>

Most colleges have long since given up the hope that faculty members could or would serve as advisers in any intensive fashion (such as is done, for example, at Sarah Lawrence College). *Faute de mieux*, they have divided the advising function between academic or curricular advising done [212] by faculty, and more personal advising which tends to be left to a para-academic category of counselors, sometimes trained in Rogerian methods of sympathetic reassurance and occasionally in a more psychoanalytic mode. This division of labor, unavoidable as it may be, tends to rob faculty members of feedback concerning the extent of their impact, perhaps especially on the shy and unself-confident students who feel more at ease in talking about their dilemmas with unthreatening counselors than in talking back to preoccupied faculty members. And the counselors, because they are clearly not academic, can only at best bind up the wounds, not change the rules of the

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<sup>30</sup> A few colleges such as Sarah Lawrence and Bard approach the model here sketched. There, the personal authority of the don or counselor takes the place of the complete absence of formal curricular requirements. The don seeks to encourage students to explore the curriculum and to abandon self-protectiveness. Since until just now Sarah Lawrence has been a woman's college, and since a great number of the faculty have been lively and talented young men, the dons have had a certain authority; they have only rarely met students whose mask of independence truculently declares: "You can't make me . . ." In my own observation of coeducational settings, women students have been more responsive and responsible—though these qualities sometimes are disadvantageous to their education and development, and frequently are too easily dismissed as mere docility.



game or give their counselees more resilient ways of playing the game.<sup>31</sup> In the present climate on the campus, counselors may join with other academically marginal people such as campus ministers to support students in opposition to faculty expectations and curricular demands. They may thus serve less to bind up wounds than to show themselves as swingers, in sympathy with student hedonism and a variety of antirational cults.

Of course, it would be wrong to make a sharp dichotomy between faculty scholars and antiacademic counselors: as pointed out earlier, many faculty have themselves become antiacademic, and there are many counselors who take seriously the academic side of college life and seek to show students what it takes to profit from that side.<sup>32</sup>

In most colleges it may not be possible to persuade faculty to resume the advising function, especially for students who have not yet decided on a major and hence are not in the province of any one department. But it seems to me important to make the attempt. However, if faculty are to serve successfully as advisers, they will have to learn more than they now know from hearsay about how they and their colleagues perform as teachers. In most colleges the privacy of the classroom protects faculty members from each other's scrutiny. And even if this were not the case, faculty members might be hesitant to be candid in talking with students about other faculty, since this power could so easily be exploited in a vindictive [213] or self-serving way. I am not sure how feasible it is or what the costs would be of breaking down the privacy of the classroom and encouraging mu-

tual visiting and criticism. Certainly, faculty members who wish to be retained or promoted because of the quality of their teaching cannot rightly insist on privacy, yet there have not been enough assessments of the side-effects of visiting to give me confidence that the tact and generosity requisite for such a procedure will be found.

I had the benefit of such a program as a member of the Social Science staff of The College of the University of Chicago, where all members attended each other's lectures and discussed each other's modes of learning and teaching in jointly taught, interdisciplinary courses.<sup>33</sup> We worked with students in small sections, though we did not monopolize the advising function. When I came to Harvard in 1958, I recruited a staff of graduate students and young faculty to work with me in a large undergraduate course whose one requirement for students would be a long term paper, work on which would facilitate a closer student-faculty relation than is common in universities. In recruiting a staff of ten or a dozen men and women for the course, I have looked for those with an interest in problems of learning and teaching, and with an intense curiosity about self and society; they come from sociology, political science, history, law, clinical and social psychology, comparative literature, and the American Civilization program. While most graduate students have little or no supervision of their initial forays in undergraduate teaching, we encourage visiting of each other's sections and critical discussion of each other's lectures; we meet weekly to discuss books read in the course and the long papers of the students to which we respond with extensive advice and commentary.

In our advising of students in this course—and each section leader became an adviser, as I also did—it was difficult to persuade Harvard undergraduates that, in writing their papers for the course, they could make any original contribution. A great many had had the disheartening experience of finding themselves no longer the brightest stars of their respective high schools, but surrounded with hundreds of outwardly im-

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Michael Maccoby, "The Game Attitude," Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Social Relations (Harvard University, 1960).

<sup>32</sup> See William G. Perry, Jr., *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), describing the work of the Harvard Bureau of Study Counsel; the Bureau not only seeks to help students grapple with the demands of their academic work but also offers faculty members the opportunity to have their classes recorded and played back under the sympathetic criticism of a counselor, in the hope of helping them to become better teachers.

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<sup>33</sup> See for a contemporary discussion, David Riesman, "Some Problems of a Course in 'Culture and Personality,'" *Journal of General Education*, V (1951), 122-136.



pressive fellow valedictorians. Some came to doubt their own powers; they reacted guardedly to their courses and to each other; their curiosity concerning the world was dimmed by the fear of revealing their inadequacies. We published three volumes of student papers, not necessarily the most elegant, in order to [214] suggest that it was possible for a neophyte to do something original, to describe something new, especially if he could draw on his own access to a particular segment of our society: of school, job or locale.<sup>34</sup>

The political and cultural revolutions on the campus have in the last few years altered what many students bring to such a course and what they expect from it. I would say that whereas our principal problem once was to encourage student self-confidence, a growing problem today is to broaden student curiosity about society. Paradoxically, too much self-confidence inhibits curiosity: some precocious students arrive at college believing that they already know what society is like—and that it is utterly vicious. To spend any energy exploring the details appears to them a delaying tactic at best, at worst a kind of counter insurgency. Many of these students have been exposed to ideas of liberation from very early on; some have been taught in secondary school by young radicals avoiding the draft or by young anti-careerists avoiding what they regard as the rat race of university life. They may not actually have read Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, Fromm, Fanon, but they have been exposed to the ideas of such writers osmotically in a kind of post-McLuhan way. They arrive at college believing themselves sophisticated; one of the problems we face as teachers is the actual provincialism of young men and women who regard themselves as fully cosmopolitan. Because their emotional and, hence, intellectual interest is so largely fo-

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<sup>34</sup> Space forbids discussing the many, undoubtedly overambitious, aims of the course which for many students will be their only exposure to the social sciences. In readings and lectures as well as small group discussions, we focus both on problems of methodology and of substance, illustrating how a great generalizing writer like Tocqueville or Veblen proceeds, and also how a meticulous clinician or participant-observer works.

cused upon America's underclass, it is difficult to evoke their interest in the full range of human experience. Many say that they want to share "the black experience," assuming that there is only a single experience and that in any case it is only of suffering and debasement on the one side and joyful naturalness on the other. It is hard to get such students to extend their disciplined empathy and curiosity to a wide variety of life in this country (though the tiny minority of active revolutionaries among them talk about contacts with the "working class").<sup>35</sup>

No longer do we have a problem of persuading students to do some piece of empirical work outside the library—our problem now is the [215] opposite, of getting students to look at books at all, if they do not fall within the current canon. Reactions to our reading Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* are especially revealing. Many students and some staff members tend to dismiss him as a French aristocrat, a liberal-conservative, who is abstract and out of another century. They cannot identify with this young Frenchman and his remarkable experience of America. Some resent his detachment, not seeing that he was passionately arguing with his fellow French aristocrats and conservatives as to how they might respond creatively to the coming democratic world rather than dig in their heels for rear-guard action.

Tocqueville would not be astonished at some aspects of the cultural revolution insofar as it is a reaction against hierarchy, tradition, and elites. Because egalitarianism has always been stronger in America than in other industrial societies, the cultural revolution forces faculty members to confront not only resistant students, but also ambivalence within themselves to the degree that they identify with students. Indeed, if one looks around the world at the student movements elsewhere, one might surmise that the cultural revolution is strongest in the United States. It is a postindustrial phenomenon in the quite concrete sense that affluent American students believe that hard scientific and technical work, or work in organizational harness, is no

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Lerner, a former Harvard College student, describes such elite student snobberies in "Respectable Bigotry," *The American Scholar*, 38 (Autumn, 1969), 606-617.



longer necessary in the affluent society. Here they share Herbert Marcuse's view of surplus repression.

Even at an avant-garde institution like Harvard College, however, such judgments, at once hedonistic and despairing, are widely voiced but less widely shared. My colleagues and I have continued to find students who are interested and alert. It may not be extravagant to say of some of the staff and students who have been involved in the course, that they are "people who have deep convictions without being fanatical, who are loving without being sentimental, who are imaginative without being unrealistic, who are fearless without depreciating life, who are disciplined without submission."<sup>36</sup>

Again and again, from *Escape from Freedom* in 1941 to *The Revolution of Hope* in 1968, Fromm contends that there are no easy formulae by which an individual can live his life. Reason is a frail but essential resource; it helps him interpret the concrete demands of the human situation [216] in which he finds himself, and partially to transcend these. In every society and in every stratum of a differentiated society, the human situation imposes its requirements on all men: in Fromm's terms, all need to assimilate in order to survive, and to be related to others in order to preserve their sanity. These requirements are not responded to in a random way, but by the formation of a social character which provides for its possessors a temporary and necessarily more or less truncated solution to life. The potential wholeness of man is only adumbrated in any extant society: in some groups, rationalism (as distinguished from reason) conquers all; in others, irrational hatred or masochism conquers.<sup>37</sup> Fromm believes that many possibilities are in principle open for less inharmonious relations between man and his own

powers, man and nature, man and other men. It is the ambitious task of education to help students explore these possibilities. The great world religions, history and biography, anthropological investigation, and self-examination can all serve to reduce man's alienation from himself and his lack of "at homeness" in the world.

Ambitious tasks can become frustrating and self-defeating if pursued with fanaticism and quixotic disregard for the local landscape. When Utopian thinking becomes, not a guiding principle, but a reason to condemn all existing structures, the result is likely to be a growing impatience and despair. In my judgment it is necessary to protect from attack efforts at small-scale experimentation of the type illustrated in what I have written here. However, I frequently run into an all-or-nothing approach: if an educational reform does not even propose to cure all deficiencies for all levels of students—if, for example, it only deals with a few well-prepared students in a prosperous academic milieu—it is for many not worth doing at all.<sup>38</sup>

In the present climate, educators like other Americans need to have what I have sometimes called the nerve of failure. I do not mean that failure is romantically desirable or that I am asking people to become heroes or martyrs, but rather that they decide what are the essential issues on which they are prepared to stand firm and if necessary be defeated, and [217]

what are the areas where they can compromise and temporize without giving way to the excesses of the cultural revolution. At many points, my own position, immersed in ambiguities, lacks the solace of clarity. My hope is a modest one that what can be discovered will become cumulative, and that even our failures, if we do not deceive ourselves as to why they occurred, may help our successors avoid our errors before they invent their own.

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<sup>36</sup> Erich Fromm in *The Revolution of Hope*, *op. cit.*, p. 160. See also the discussion of the infectious quality of interest (which, however, Fromm distinguishes from curiosity, which he defines as passive, whereas in the text I have used the two terms interchangeably), *ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of the various kinds of violence which, in the animal world, are species-specific to man, see Fromm, *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil*, *op. cit.*, chap. 2.

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<sup>38</sup> One does of course encounter the recurrent strategy of "the worse, the better": if structures such as universities can be destroyed and if anarchy occurs, then there is a chance that the Revolution may triumph. Under American conditions, it seems to me far more likely that the Right will triumph or that disintegration will indeed spread.