

Restoring the Sacred House of Education

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WE ARE ACCUSTOMED to reading in essays on the dangers of specialization in education that it separates the specialist from the deeper spiritual and intellectual springs of his cultural tradition.¹ In *The Revolt of the Masses*, José Ortega y Gasset identified an important connection between specialization and what he called the mass-man.² For Ortega, the mass-man's emergence in Europe is the result of long-smoldering economic, scientific, and political developments that took hold in the nineteenth century. Modern men, for example, live under conditions of material comfort unknown to men of earlier times. Yet material comfort is not so important a fact for Ortega as is the common belief that material well-being is a right, rather than a blessing of providence. Modern technological advances have greatly eased the problems of scarcity that dominated life before modernity. Under that domination, human life was marked by the steady accumulation of burdens that imposed on the individual restrictions and problems of adaptation that made him feel the weight of fragile embodiment. In such a life, moments of happiness and comfort appear as blessings to be gratefully received. The mass-

man by contrast experiences life as a bountiful exemption from restrictions.

According to Ortega, the transformation of morality and politics that created an unprecedented egalitarian arrangement of society in the latter half of the nineteenth century is the consequence of the energetic application of the "principles" of liberal democracy, scientific experimentation, and industrialization. The principles of scientific experimentation and industrialization Ortega calls technology, and its expansion is what separates the life of modern mass-men from the lives of men of all former times. In a chapter titled "The Mass-Man Dissected" Ortega graphically illustrates his claim.

For the populace, the *vulgus*, of all epochs, "life" had meant, first of all, limitation, obligation, dependence: in a word, pressure. Call it oppression, if you like, as long as oppression be understood to be cosmic, as well as legal and social. For cosmic oppression was never absent from the world until the expansion of modern science—physical and administrative—to a practically limitless extent. Previously, even for the rich and powerful, the world was a place of poverty, difficulty, and danger.³

Maintaining this technological order of abundance and relative ease requires great effort and highly talented people, but this is not recognized by the mass-

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man who takes the benefits of technology to be given in the nature of things, like sunlight and air. The fact of ingratitude for his advantages, along with the nearly limitless possibilities for satisfying rapidly multiplying desires, comprise what Ortega calls the "spoiled child" psychology. For Ortega, these two elements of the spoiled child constitute "a key in examining the soul of today's mass-man."

The scientist is the prototypical mass-man because the scientist is singularly devoted to extending human domination over creation through technology. The scientist sees this extension as a noble undertaking because it holds out the surest prospect of satisfying the expectations of the masses. Satisfying material expectations is held by the mass-man as the highest work of knowledge, and for this reason the specialist-scientist is viewed by his beneficiaries as the paradigmatic educated man. Ortega is careful to argue that this is not so:

Previously, men could be divided simply into the learned and the ignorant: some more or less learned, and some more or less ignorant. But the specialist cannot be subsumed under either of these two categories. He is not learned, for he is formally ignorant of all that does not fit into his specialty; but neither is he ignorant, for he is "a man of science," a scientist, and he knows his own sliver of the universe quite well. We shall have to call him a learned-ignoramus, which is a very serious matter, for it means that he will act in all areas in which he is ignorant, not like an ignorant man, but with all the airs of one who is learned in his own special line.⁴

If the specialist, who is trained with a view to technology and work, is taken to be, and sees himself as, an educated person even though he is not, then what is education, and what does it mean to be educated? What should education as a social undertaking seek to do? Sir Richard Livingstone (1880-1960), once president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, gave a vigorous response to these ques-

tions in 1944. In a lecture published under the title *Plato and Modern Education*, Livingstone presented an analysis of the ills of education and a prescription for recovery that we do well to consider today. But before turning to his lecture, one other observation needs attention.

For most people, past and present, the horizon of learning available to them is restricted by the demands of daily life, or limited mental capacity, or lack of desire or discipline, or some other cause. The tendency of specialization to isolate the specialist from a wider range of knowledge need not place him in a position relative to the learning of his tradition much different from what it was for people in a simpler time. To the contrary, the relative ease with which we are able to meet the needs of the body leaves us more time for leisure than our ancestors enjoyed, and this opens possibilities as never before to pursue the life of the mind. There is in principle no reason why one cannot be both a specialist-scientist and a cultivator of the higher, contemplative faculty of the human soul; the free time technology provides can be a rich source of that leisure Josef Pieper described as the basis of culture. What inhibits a culturally rejuvenating use of time is the inability to see the pursuit of wisdom as a suitably "useful" activity. In this, education is more symptom than cause.

The way a society educates its young is an expression of what that society understands man fundamentally to be, and the kind of life that is good for man. The reigning conception of man is a desiccated version of the older Christian one. This constricted conception of man lacks what Elizabeth Anscombe once called an adequate philosophy of psychology, but which I think is better understood as an adequate knowledge of human nature and of what it means for that nature to be fulfilled. Anscombe was a profound modern thinker whose three theses concerning modern moral philosophy are worth

considering:

...it is not profitable for us at present to do moral philosophy; that should be laid aside at any rate until we have an adequate philosophy of psychology, in which we are conspicuously lacking. The second is that the concepts of obligation, and duty—*moral* obligation and *moral* duty, that is to say—and of what is *morally* right and wrong, and of the *moral* sense of “ought,” ought to be jettisoned if this is psychologically possible; because they are survivals, or derivatives from survivals, from an earlier conception of ethics which no longer generally survives, and are only harmful without it. My third thesis is that the differences between the well-known English writers on moral philosophy from Sidgwick to the present day are of little importance.⁵

If moral philosophy considers the nature of man and the good life, it must be concerned with those qualities that make for a good person. It must be concerned with virtue, what it is, what virtues are suitable to human beings, and how the virtues are inculcated in the human personality. This requires knowledge of human nature and of how that nature is brought to mature realization, or what Anscombe here calls an adequate philosophy of psychology. It is with her second thesis, however, that Anscombe’s argument gets interesting.

One of the important differences between ancient and modern writers on ethics is the lack in ancient writing of our modern concept of *moral* right and wrong (hence Anscombe’s use of italics when writing the word). The ancients had the word and some nascent sense of what it would come to mean, but they lacked (and here Anscombe has Aristotle in mind) the divine law conception of ethics within which the word “moral” takes on the meaning we attach to it. In the ancients, Anscombe writes, we find discussion of what is virtuous and vicious, just and unjust, but not of what is right and wrong, licit or illicit. The law conception

of ethics comes to Western civilization in Christianity by way of Judaism, and Christendom’s passing left behind that conception of ethics with its notions of right and wrong. Early modern philosophers sought an alternate ground of morals but were not able to render coherent the ideas of right and wrong apart from a law conception of ethics. Not even Immanuel Kant’s attempt at an ethics of law would work because his reliance upon the autonomous self-legislator ignores the need of a superior law-making power, able to enforce its decrees, if law is to function as law at all. Moreover, Kant’s description of the moral law as consisting in universalizable maxims requires that we be able adequately to describe human conduct amid the variety of possible circumstances in order to arrive at universally applicable maxims. This points to the need of an authority capable of making the distinctions necessitated by the various circumstances that affect the description of an action as licit or illicit. Kant has no such authority.

Anscombe’s call to abandon the vocabulary of moral right and wrong and of moral obligation is a response to her belief that we shall not soon recover the *more complete philosophy of man* and the cosmos needed to infuse this vocabulary with meaning. In evidence of this, we have her argument that the differences among the well-known English writers on moral philosophy from Sidgwick to the present are not important. Anscombe contends that modern English moral philosophy is utilitarian, and this philosophy, from John Stuart Mill to Henry Sidgwick, had one feature that saved it from moral anarchy: commitment to an exceptionless moral norm. For Mill, autonomous persons in a liberal society had the right to do whatever they wished so long as they did not harm others. This rule, do not harm others, was absolute, exceptionless, not subject to the pleasure-pain calculus. In Sidgwick, the “harm

principle" is subjected to the utilitarian balancing of pleasure and pain and so reduced to a contingent principle that no longer sets boundaries on human conduct. This elimination of exceptionless norms from English moral philosophy was inevitable because absolute norms become unintelligible without a conception of man and his place in the cosmos capable of showing us where the boundaries are.

This takes us back to Anscombe's first thesis, but it shows us also how the three theses are related. We lack a conception of human nature suitable to the work of moral philosophy because as a people we in the West no longer believe in a larger philosophy of being that can make sense of man. Without that larger philosophy of being, and institutions invested with the authority to interpret and organize the social implications of that philosophy, we cannot come to public agreement on the meaning of words like moral obligation, moral right, and moral wrong, licit and illicit. These words no longer communicate anything thought to be true about morals, but they can be used as cover for coercive uses of power against others, and in this sense the vocabulary of moral obligation has become harmful.

Anscombe suggests instead that we jettison this vocabulary in preference to something like Aristotle's idea of justice.⁶ We may not be able to explain why, for example, securing the judicial punishment of a man known to be innocent is morally wrong, especially if the consequences of doing so are beneficial to society, but we can see clearly that the act is unfair and therefore unjust. Any act that can be seen as unjust should be avoided. But why should we avoid an act thought to be beneficial to society simply because it is unjust? It is emblematic of the philosophical disorder of our time that so many contemporary philosophers think the question "Why be moral?" is an interesting one. The question is interest-

ing only if the answer is not obvious, and the answer is not obvious because the loss of understanding of the nature of man has resulted finally in the belief that whatever meaning human life possesses is a private meaning invented for the service of the autonomous self.

The word "moral" can thus have as many particular definitions as there are autonomous selves to define it. The way through this confusion cannot be made clearer by substituting for the thorny concept of morality the concept of justice, for after Christendom the idea of justice is equally thorny. If we no longer believe in the older Christian philosophy of being, in the Holy Trinity, in sin and redemption, then man or the state becomes the new highest expression of being, and his (or its) purposes come to define what is right and good. Exceptionless moral norms come from an unchanging Giver of norms who has fitted man to certain ends. The norms serve to guide us to the fulfillment of our natures. Godless man and the state are not unchanging things, and so any norms either of these generate cannot be exceptionless, but rather change as the human situation (or our perception of the human situation) changes.

The reigning view of man is inadequate because it is reductionist, seeing him as a thinking body, rather than as an incarnated spirit. Man the incarnated spirit seeks to fulfill the highest potential of his nature. Since this nature is rational and spiritual, reason is understood to be both ratiocinative and contemplative, but contemplation is the most sublime function of the soul. In contemplation the soul encounters the supernatural ground of its being. This is the source of the life-giving truth the soul most desires, and the true basis of culture. Education seeks to develop the powers of reason that lead to contemplation. Because man the incarnated spirit is also a body, the uses he makes of his body need special attention.

The body has needs that give pleasure when satisfied. Like all passions, the passion for pleasure is easily excited. Over-indulgence of the passions makes one selfish and vain, so training the affections to desire the right things, and the right people, at the right time, for the right reason, in the right way—virtue—is a vital part of education.⁷

Man as thinking body also seeks to fulfill the highest potential of his nature, but since that nature is simply corporeal he knows reason only as ratiocination. But the ratiocination of man the thinking body occupies a narrower horizon than that of man the incarnated spirit because he sees no purpose for reason beyond satisfying the needs and desires of his embodiment. There are no higher purposes for man that would channel the uses of his rational powers toward ends surpassing the body. In our time, reason for man the thinking body is technological rationality, its focus is the observable world, and its goal is to control the world for the comfort and convenience of man. Our schools perpetuate this view of man as thinking body and its spawn, the cult of the body, because the purposes and methods of education proceed from a people's deepest philosophical understanding of what human beings are. The cult of the body exalts technology because technology satisfies corporeal needs and desires. Modern man's success at serving the body through technology is what produces the psychology Ortega insightfully diagnosed.

This explains also the emergence of specialist-scientists as the new elite class. This class has rightly been called the priesthood of the new religious dispensation because it holds the secrets of the sacramental rites of the cult. Their educations and the desiccated ethics those educations assume are taken as the best our culture has to offer. The form of this education is therefore to be reproduced as completely as possible throughout society. For this reason our system of

public education from kindergarten to graduate school is in fact a system of mis-education that preserves the cult of the body lying at the root of modern man's devotion to technology. The restoration of education will probably languish until the cult of the body is either defeated or spent. Even that will not be enough unless the pinched anthropology of the broken cult is replaced by a more complete understanding of man and the good life. Steps in that direction were skillfully adumbrated by Sir Richard Livingstone when he laid out a view of education resting on the kind of conception of human nature we must return to if the house of education is to be restored.

Livingstone delivered the Rede Lecture at Cambridge University in 1944, and chose as his subject the condition of education in contemporary England. In *Plato and Modern Education*,⁸ he sought to construct a faithful interpretation of Plato's philosophy of education that was crafted to suit the peculiar needs of our time. Livingstone begins with Plato's remarks on education in the early dialogue *Euthydemus* in which the philosopher claims that all the good things that life may bring such as health, beauty, wealth, knowledge and intellect, freedom and peace, are morally neutral in themselves. What is good or bad is the way one chooses to use them, and so education should dispose the soul to choose and to act well. This cannot be accomplished by mere training in the utilitarian techniques of use, but in the education of the soul into the habits of goodness and virtue so that it is *naturally* disposed to act well. In the *Laches*, Plato describes children as "a man's riches, the greatest of his possessions," and tells us that "the whole fortune of his house depends on whether they turn out ill or well." With so much at stake, Livingstone states, education must begin as "the training to goodness from youth," dispelling ignorance by fitting the mind to accept what reason shows to

be right and good:

When the child goes to school, "the works of the great poets are put into his hands, and he learns them by heart," that he may see what human greatness is and desire to imitate it. He learns music that he may mould his soul to rhythm and harmony. In his later education mathematics are used, not for any immediate practical end but to accustom his mind, through their abstract forms, to look past the flux of changing phenomena to the incorporeal, eternal world of being; he studies Harmonics and Astronomy so that as he contemplates the stars, "Which are the brain of heaven..." he may be imbued with a sense of the beauty of order and law...the right education must tune the two strings of body and mind to a perfect spiritual harmony.⁹

Clearly, this understanding of the purpose of a school's curriculum is at odds with the prevailing view. The prevailing view is concerned "with teaching people how to get on, never with teaching them where they are getting on to."¹⁰ The older view saw the work of education as developing in the young the ability to think about and to understand the purposes in life that are worthy of man. Achieving this understanding is what reason does, and reaching understanding of the highest purposes of man is wisdom—the pinnacle of education. From here, contemplation becomes possible.

Plato was convinced that the early years of a child's life were crucial to the kind of man or woman that child would become. He insisted therefore that the surroundings in which youth is passed should conduce to education. But if a child's surroundings are to be fitted to the ends of education, a definite grasp of those ends must be achieved. Livingstone finds the following passage from the *Republic* to be perhaps the most important of all of Plato's comments on education. "[T]he young should live in a wholesome climate and drink in good from every quarter, so that like a wind bringing health

from healthy lands, some influence from noble works may from childhood upward constantly fall on ear and eye and insensibly draw them into sympathy and harmony with the beauty of reason." For Livingstone, this passage concisely speaks to the need of education to evoke the love of beauty, order, goodness, and truth, in short, of reason itself. Education thus understood changes the soul it enters and so must be seen as a moral and spiritual undertaking.

This brings us to the problem Livingstone addresses in his lecture. Education in England may never have assimilated to Plato's model completely but it did, we are told, approximate it at places like Oxford and Cambridge, Winchester and Eton, and a few of the other "public" schools. Moreover, even if English education at the lesser schools failed to achieve the platonic form, that form was often held out as the goal to be striven for. But by 1944, when Livingstone held forth at Cambridge, the situation had changed. Livingstone saw English education in his time to be foundering, unsure of what it existed to do.

Our eyes are blinded by a dust-storm of School Certificates, Higher Certificates, Scholarships, Degrees, Diplomas, Examinations beyond counting; the air is full of the loud demands of industry, commerce, and the professions, and through the din and mist the figure of education is faintly described. On closer view, she seems more like Proteus than Athene, and mainly occupied with other interests than the training of the soul which Plato thought her true business. Why has she lost the clear and earnest purpose of earlier days?¹¹

In his book on education, *Emile*, Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote that the student should have "[n]o book other than the world: no instruction other than facts. The child who reads does not think, he only reads: he is not instructed, he learns words." This sounds remarkably like the John Dewey of *Experience and Education*

(1938). Traditional learning in Dewey's view was a brutal process of imposition upon the young through which they are made to be docile and obedient. This older education was formulated for a society Dewey saw as essentially static, while ours is a society in which change is the rule, and in such a society the older, traditional education no longer suffices. For Dewey, subject matter should be selected and organized to begin with the experiences of causal relations that children already have, then should seek to become more searching and systematic as the child ages and becomes more sophisticated. This is because accurate calculation of the consequences of action—of means—is necessary to the attainment of beneficial ends. To calculate well, one must be able to understand the interrelations of the many means needed to satisfy a purpose. This kind of calculation is, for Dewey, at the heart of scientific method, and scientific method is the putative life's blood of progressive education and its *ne plus ultra*. Dewey's is a thoroughly empirical approach to education based on the assumption that man is a creature possessing a single, material dimension. Thus Dewey can say that "scientific method is the only authentic means at our command for getting at the significance of our everyday experiences of the world in which we live."

In response, Livingstone writes: "If we listen to this subtly materialistic doctrine we must rewrite the ancient text to run 'In the beginning was, not the Word, but the Situation.' It is a disastrous creed. If it is followed, the child is not likely to be any better than the society of his time. The child no doubt should be formed by contact with the world. But it must be the right world, not merely the world of every day; it must be the world at its best, a world akin to society as it is, but far higher and better."¹² Here we find the essence of the debate over the proper approach to education: Is it to be a utilitarian training

for the world of work in the ever-changing technological society, as Dewey would argue (though with an admixture of preparation for democratic participation in society); or is it to be first of all that training to goodness described by Plato that prepares the soul to use rightly the powers it will eventually wield? Is Dewey right, or is Plato?

The reader might be tempted to strike a middle path, saying that the proper course is to be found somewhere between Dewey and Plato. But this is a dangerous route to take because an approach to education must reflect the philosophies of man, society, and the good life that inform it. Dewey's progressive education rests upon philosophical notions of man and the good life that are not compatible with the understanding of education that Livingstone presents. There is little room for philosophical accommodation between these two visions. Livingstone in fact seeks to head off this accommodationist approach with a brief consideration of the special demands that our present situation places on education. Since the days of Plato, three new influences have worked to change education: the accumulation of knowledge, the need of formal education in earning a living, and the growth of applied science and technology. These concerns are legitimate and properly present challenges of adaptation to education, but Livingstone is convinced that the approach we have decided upon is not the right one.

The need for income and for acquaintance with the useful technologies of the modern work place rightly lay claim to a certain amount of educational attention, but it is not at all clear that these needs should *take over* the education of the young. We can train technicians, people skilled in the arts of ciphering who will maintain the technological civilization we have created, but Livingstone argues that this is not enough. We may produce "masters of calculation, highly trained in

the finest subtleties and in all that makes for quickness of mind,"¹³ but this will not secure for us just government and a decent society. This can be had, according to Livingstone, only where people have been trained to goodness from youth. Livingstone's analysis holds that there were at least two critical places where wise choices had to be taken, and we failed in both tests. The first of these came with the new demands upon education made by industry and technology. The choice was either to fold an approach to the new demands into the prevailing view of education, or to reach for a new understanding of the meaning of education to harmonize with the new industrial demands. In Livingstone's view, we wrongly took the latter course. The second moment of choice brought the universalization of education.

Until the nineteenth century, education was largely done privately, by the churches and through local or private association in which local government was often involved. This allowed for a maximum amount of control over education by parents and communities. But we chose instead to turn over education to the state, and through its agency to make rationally managed education available equally to everyone. This practically ensured that education would be bent to the utilitarian demands of the economy. In a passage that brings Livingstone's presentation to its climax, he describes the situation into which we have fallen:

Experts and highly trained intelligence are essential, if the modern world is not to collapse. But civilisation is compounded of two elements: the machine, continually growing more efficient and complicated, and the human being. From this dualism spring the chief human problems: the relation of the individual soul to the material civilisation, and its relation to the society and to the state. The state may cramp the soul; material civilisation tends to suffocate it painlessly. The danger of such suffocation is the

theme of moralists in every age, but clearly it increases as material civilisation develops and men concentrate on managing and improving the machine or are buried under its products. Two forces can counteract this danger—religion and education. Unfortunately, the more civilisation develops, the less education inclines to serve this purpose. It, too, is enslaved to the machine and, absorbed in training people to work it, makes them still more machine-minded and fosters the very evil that it ought to prevent. It is characteristic of today that, when we discuss which subjects should be studied, or which languages should be learnt, the first consideration is nearly always utility; we ask what is most useful for the machine, not what is most likely to make a good human being. Neither Plato nor the Middle Ages would have made that mistake.¹⁴

The human soul is able to transcend the limits of its embodiment and even to contemplate supernatural verities. Using this power convinces us that being is larger than the temporal order; and that conviction induces in us the desire for truth and for purpose, for meaning, and for an intelligible range of moral value. In short, the human soul craves contact with the unchanging ground of its being. Understanding this ground (if understanding is the right word) and its implications for human life and conduct are the driving concerns of cultural tradition. Introducing the young into a cultural tradition is education's primary work. Education that abandons this function ceases, in Livingstone's view, to be education.

The importance of this analysis is heightened by the modern spread of individual liberty. I think George Parkin Grant was right when he wrote that among the primary concerns of moral philosophy in our time is to understand the relation of truth to freedom. We need to take seriously the natural moral law and its proper influence on a culture that has achieved individual liberty. The preservation of civilization and liberty requires the maintenance of standards by which we know

the good from the bad, the better from the worse, and these from the best, but modern education teaches that such standards constitute a violative imposition of the arbitrary values of one free mind upon another.¹⁵ There are no standards, for this implies a Giver of standards whose will places limits on our will. Truth and goodness and beauty, and the things of enduring value that make life human and humane, are held by modern education to be the stuff of mere opinion, and so not properly part of the education of a free and diverse population. This "Deweyan" vision of education differs sharply from that of Plato, for whom the noblest of studies considers "what man is and how he should live." Education is supposed to arm the educated person with knowledge of the sound principles of things. This knowledge serves as a foundation upon which the edifice of understanding rests.

In pursuit of that foundation, Livingstone makes three "modest suggestions." First, we need a clear understanding of what a human being is, and from this, of what it means to be a good human being. This will help correct the particulars of educational practice, setting them upon firmer ground. Second, education is not simply about life, but about the good life. To understand the good life we must see it as the good life *for man*, and this requires that we spend time thinking about what it means for a life to be good. Therefore, Livingstone suggests that we encourage teacher and student alike to take seriously the labor of reflection about man and human flourishing. Third, in all teaching as much attention should be paid to values as to facts. "Human progress depends on a double advance—increase in knowledge and discovery of higher values. We concentrate on the first, but the second is far more important. Increase of knowledge may lead to nothing but elaborate barbarism; as indeed our own age shows."¹⁶ It is clear that Livingstone finds education suffering from a debilitat-

ing and perhaps fatal constriction in which the zeal for knowledge surges while the desire for higher values which civilize that knowledge is lost. Livingstone's argument for a Platonic remedy of this problem is bracing, but stops short of the medicine we need.

The co-optation of education by government, with its irresponsible doctrine of church-state separation, is the chief means by which the intellectual errors bedeviling education are held in place. The most salubrious measure we could take is to abolish government-run public schools altogether and with them those ponderous bureaucracies that choke education down to a gasp. But government support of public schools, and the confiscation of money to pay for them, is not likely to end anytime soon; too many of our countrymen believe the dismal institutions are vital to our national survival!

What is needed among the first steps to recovery is a vigorous defense of the principle of subsidiarity, according to which we understand that, for every important operation of society, authority should be held at the most local level. Each division of society has authority peculiar to its function that cannot be usurped by another division without causing dislocation and harm. The authority of the family, for example, cannot be taken by the state without causing harm to the family and finally to the state as well. Educating children is the duty of parents and so they are the ones we should expect to see to it. Parents who, for whatever reason, wish to consign their children to public schools should be left unmolested in that choice, but paying the bills for those schools should rest with them alone.¹⁷ Parents who do not send their children to public schools should not be compelled to pay for them, and people with no children at all should be left in peace. If it is important that children be educated, it is plainly not important that they be educated in government-run public schools. The only

justification for taxing everyone for public schools is that we are singularly in need of the services these institutions provide. This assertion is manifestly false. The presumed need we have of public schools is their ability to forge us into a common nation, possessed of the enculturating ideology of the government managers of the schools. This is a clear imposition upon the principle of subsidiarity, because the authority and the duties of parents are intruded on by the state when it establishes itself as a rival—with taxation and enforcement powers—in the role of nurturer of the souls of children. Government should

create and sustain the conditions in which parents can fulfill their duties to their children, but it must not usurp their position.

If education is to be restored schools must rise from the spiritual crouch of man as thinking body, but government-run public schools are ideologically opposed to any education that will lift a child from base materialism. They are therefore a cause and not a cure of our present ills. It is only when schools are suffused with a proper knowledge of man and the good life that we will see the salutary changes in education that for now face daunting resistance.

1. See, for example, the "Statement of Principles," in *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (New York, 1962, first published in 1930). Essays in this volume that touch upon themes of industrialism and specialization include "Reconstructed But Unregenerate" by John Crowe Ransom, "Education, Past and Present" by John Gould Fletcher, and "Whither Southern Economy?" by Herman Clarence Nixon. See also José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (Notre Dame, 1985); Richard M. Weaver *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago, 1948); Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York, 1964); George Parkin Grant, *Technology and Justice* (Notre Dame, 1986). 2. José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (Notre Dame, 1985), chapter 12, "The Barbarism of Specialization" (94-100). 3. *Ibid.*, 46. 4. *Ibid.*, 98. 5. G.E.M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," in *The Collected Philosophical Papers of G.E.M. Anscombe*, Vol. 3, *Ethics, Religion and Politics* (Minneapolis, 1981), 26. 6. As a first approach to defining justice, Aristotle says " 'just' is what is lawful and fair, and 'unjust' is what is unlawful and unfair." *Nic. Eth.*, V, 1129a, 30. 7. *Nic. Eth.*, II, 1106b, 20. 8. Sir Richard Livingstone, *Plato and Modern Education*, The Rede Lecture, 1944 (Cambridge, Eng.). 9. *Ibid.*, 9. 10. George Parkin Grant, "Natural Law," in *Philosophy in the Mass Age* (Toronto, 1995), 29-30. 11. *Op. cit.*, 9-10. 12. *Ibid.*, 13. 13. *Ibid.*, 17. 14. *Ibid.*, 21-22. 15. This formal commitment to moral skepticism does not stop educationists from preaching the penumbral eth-

ics of the cult of the body, of which, I contend, the fetishes of diversity and multiculturalism are part because they treat accidental properties like sex and race as essential to human nature. 16. *Ibid.*, 32. 17. One could argue that confining public schools only to the money they can get from their patrons would destroy them. This argument falters on the fact that many private and parochial schools are able to survive on their incomes. Predictably, advocates of public schools will claim that allowing people to opt out of the system and take their money with them will leave to the public schools only poor families who cannot pay enough to support the system. There is evidence both for and against this claim, but even if the assertion is true, the fact that so many people would leave the public school system if they could take their tax money with them represents a high degree of dissatisfaction. Public schools have little incentive to improve since their money stream is powered by the confiscatory state. The charge that public schools would be changed fundamentally by withdrawing their unjust tax support is true (although the nature of the change cannot be predicted) but the point isn't to change public schools. The point is to return the practical responsibility for educating children back to their parents and to leave them the money with which to do it. The impact this would have on public schools is a side effect, however beneficial it might be.