

for an in-depth exploration of the meaning of patriotism and its many possible manifestations, because it might lead to a "moral relativism," which so many people currently believe threatens the foundation of American society.

A Catholic student might mention that the American Catholic Bishops' notion of patriotism—with respect to the manufacture, storage, and use of nuclear weapons—appears to be different from that of every president since Truman. Furthermore, the American Catholic Bishops' position also differs from that of the French Bishops, who argued that the use of nuclear weapons, under some circumstances, might be justified. Which is the *true* patriotism? Is it unpatriotic to advocate unilateral nuclear disarmament?<sup>25</sup>

Another student might mention that many American Nobel Prize winners, as well as other prominent American scientists, have pledged not to work on the Strategic Defense Initiative, even though our president has assigned it an extremely high national priority. Does the scientists' refusal to work on Star Wars constitute an unpatriotic act? Now that we are all part of the global village, does patriotism take on a wholly different cast than it did as recently as 50 years ago?

Wynne might run into additional trouble in inculcating patriotism if he examined the etymology of the term. The word patriotism comes from the fourteenth century argument used by the Franciscan philosopher William of

Occam to justify King Edward III's claim that taxes to defend *communis patria*—the fatherland—were morally superior to charity for the poor. William of Occam, Reagan, and perhaps Wynne would make up a nice troika.

Take the issue of school order and discipline. Another bright student might discover some of Stanley Milgram's work. According to Milgram, the problem is not that Americans tend to be too disobedient, but that in many instances they are far too submissive to inappropriate authority figures. What Milgram and many other social psychologists have discovered is that most Americans cannot distinguish between submission to appropriate authority figures and the appropriate time to rebel against inappropriate authority.<sup>6</sup>

Even granting that the present state of discipline and disorder in our schools is undesirable, Wynne's alternative may be even less desirable. Resurrecting the emphasis on external forms of discipline and giving primary control for punitive acts to the teacher or other authority figure may well create the conditions for a nation of Eichmans and Calleys, "good soldiers" who could claim innocence, saying, "I was simply doing my duty, following the orders of my superiors, your honor."

What of honesty? Surely the honesty-is-the-best-policy doctrine can be urged under all circumstances? Surely the school should have a simple, straightline approach to indoctrinating the moral value of honesty. And yet a bright student would probably ask,

somewhere along the way, "Was not President Eisenhower's lying about the U-2 spy plane to the Russian leader justified in the interest of national security? Are there not competing moral values in many life circumstances?" Yes, we need a great tradition in education, and schools need to transmit moral values. And yes, things could be far better in our schools than they are now. And perhaps even more important, things could be much better in our nation than they now are.

Nostalgia for the supposed golden age of education, in which moral values were inculcated successfully, will not solve the problems of the twenty-first century. What is appropriate is for schools to teach the application of critical thinking to moral problems in the appropriate context. □

<sup>1</sup>Milton Rokeach, *The Nature of Human Values* (New York: The Free Press, 1973), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Norman T. Feather, *Values in Education and Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup>Timothy J. Cooney, *Telling Right from Wrong* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1985).

<sup>4</sup>H. L. Mencken, *A Mencken Chrestomathy* (New York: Knopf, Vintage Press, 1982), p. 168.

<sup>5</sup>Eugene Kennedy, "America's Activist Bishops," *New York Times Magazine* 12 August 1984, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup>Stanley Milgram, "Behavioral Study of Obedience," *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology* 67 (1963): 371-378.

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## Fulfilling the Great Tradition Through Interpersonal Honesty: A Response to Wynne

DAVID ASPY, CHERYL ASPY, AND FLORA ROEBUCK

The cause and effect relationship that Edward A. Wynne establishes between values clarification strategies in schools and the increase in juvenile problems is tenuous at best. Any traits—honesty, diligence, obedience, patriotism, and the like—that schools attempt to cultivate necessarily interact with larger social realities beyond the schools.

This has always been the case. The advent of public schools, for example, which enabled increasing numbers of people to be educated, also caused them to see differently what their society's elite deemed virtuous. No longer would so-called virtues be used by the few to limit the access of the masses to full enfranchisement.

Prior to public education, some

people had attained or inherited positions that made them immune to public scrutiny and "testing." But educated people were able to use a free press and other forms of public probing to uncover the inconsistencies between pious public expressions and private deceptions. The results were Teapot Dome, Watergate, Abscam, and Koreagate. As a result, the public became

aware that many so-called moral leaders were duplicitous at best and fraudulent at worst.

Educated people redefined honesty as a two-way street: honest children demanded honest parents, and diligent, obedient, and patriotic citizens demanded the same of their leaders. These virtues were applied at all levels as a test for everyone. Students tested teachers, who tested administrators, who, in turn, tested school board members and the broader community. These test results showed that many people flunked, but the documentation of these failures ushered in an age of realism.

Students who had heard and read about virtue became aware that their teachers and administrators were also part of a duplicitous generation. Whereas students were punished for lying or cheating, their leaders, they learned, considered it shrewd to lie and naive to practice the virtues of the great tradition. The art was to mouth virtu-

ous statements but to practice hypocrisy.

The embodiment of this world view, watched faithfully by tens of millions of Americans, is *Dallas*, a television show. In it, J. R. lives in a big house and drives a big car; meanwhile, somewhere beyond his ranch, honest, diligent, obedient, patriotic school teachers earn little more than poverty wages in some states.

Students learn from observation, advertising, and government leaders, as well as from public schools. Many worldly-wise students see life as a con game in which neither television advertising, nor test scores and college admissions are free from dishonesty and manipulation.

One of the positive thrusts of the humanistic education movement of the 1960s was getting teachers, administrators, and students to be honest with one another. The truth was that it was difficult to get administrators—and people higher in the organiza-

tion—to be interpersonally honest. Nevertheless humanistic educators tried to develop and use methods that would bring the great tradition into its full realization.

We suggest that the schools' divergence from the great tradition has its roots in each of us when we try to live double lives. Someone said a long time ago, "Your actions speak so loudly that I can't hear a thing you say."

Students expect to see in our lives the virtues that we extol; when they do not see them, they know our words lie. They turn to other things. If we want to reinvigorate the great tradition, we can practice it. There is no shortcut. □

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## Wynne Replies: Turning Back Toward Authority and Responsibility

EDWARD A. WYNNE

In a longer version of my article, I cited many reasons for the decline of the great tradition in schools, and I entirely agree that the prevailing philosophies of modern pedagogy are not the sole cause of the decline. But I am still strongly critical of the ways in which contemporary academics philosophically criticize—rather than support—the great tradition.

The commentators agreed that patriotism is fine, but proceeded to raise the kinds of questions that might arise in any important and long-lived country: what about John Dean? about Eisenhower and the U-2? Patriotism defined by such qualifications is far different from traditional patriotism—the love of clan, tribe, or extended family—which all serious thinkers until the nineteenth century expected adults to transmit to the young.

One commentator, who had trouble with "Honor thy father and mother," dug up all sorts of qualifications, such as social security, parents living out of state, and so on. Do I live in a different country from these critics? A persistent

concern which I hear from parents today is how to get respect and obedience from the children and adolescents living in their homes. Cannot my critics simply agree that children, including adolescents, should respectfully obey their parents in almost all instances, even if they disagree with them? Isn't that preferable to always anticipating some form of "Yes, but..." from children?

Philosophers have differed about the degree to which adults should be offered choice among values. But the notoriously inconsistent Rousseau was the sole figure between the fifth century B.C. (of Plato and the Book of Proverbs) and the nineteenth century explicitly sympathetic to giving such choices to children and adolescents. Twenty-four centuries provide a good foundation for a tradition, a foundation which the commentators fail to shake.

Other grandiose and problematic comments—the Nazis also favored patriotism; children may actually help elderly parents by discouraging them

from living with them; we must personally believe in what we do for our conduct to be efficacious—are of the Phil Donahue sort: contentious, wordy, and sometimes irresponsible. These propositions quite reasonably turn off adolescents about the purposefulness of their school experience and the value of good citizenship.

Many classroom teachers with whom I deal in my graduate teaching have a major intellectual difficulty with the question of why and how to exercise necessary authority over pupils. After considering the responses to my article, I can better understand the roots of these teachers' confusion. The great tradition's simple assumption that adults know more than children, and thus they should bear some authority over them, has been qualified and complicated. It is as though one needs a schoolwide constitutional convention to promulgate a rule against cheating. This represents an unnecessary and mischievous shift away from the great tradition. It should be reversed. □

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