

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 virtuous

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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