



# IMPRIMIS

Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan 49242

December 1987 Volume 16, No. 12

## The Curious Faiths of Anti-Heroism

By George Roche

*Editor's Preview:* This month's *IMPRIMIS* issue offers an excerpt from Hillsdale College President George Roche's book, *A World Without Heroes: The Modern Tragedy*. Recalling the tradition of Chesterton, Lewis, Merton and Muggeridge, he rebukes secular humanism, the creed of anti-heroes, as the most dehumanizing force of our modern age. We live, he says, in a world without heroes, a world which rarely challenges evolution as the "origin" of all life and where natural selection is sold to the public as if it were our only hope of salvation. This excerpt focuses on the anti-heroic myths which have attempted to supplant a religious explanation for our existence and reveals an incisive and courageous spirit determined to defend and strengthen traditional values.

In recent years, a god called "the Me" claimed so many converts that the 1970s became known as "the Me generation." Professor Robert Nisbet included the mystical tenet of the Me in his *History of the Idea of Progress*: "All that matters is what lies within the Me, its pains and its release from pains." The Me's apostles soon filled the paperback racks with exhortations for one to discover the Real Me and set it free. For those poor souls in a fallen relationship with the Me, secular redemption was promised through exercise and jogging, better nutrition, transactional analysis, group encounters, and the like; and in the event of any failure whatsoever, counseling, always counseling. Robert Capon has explored this subject in detail, and it is indeed food for thought.

If so unpromising a god as unrelieved narcissism, the Me, can form the basis for

a mass religion, it is indeed wisely said that everyone must believe in some god. By "god," I mean whatever pre-emptive authority we set over the mystery of our being. The authority, of course, can be virtually anything, secular or divine, from the Me, or the sun, or cocaine, to the Tao of the East, the one God of Islam, and the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Christianity. To a son of the Enlightenment, the god of all men is Man, our collective being transcending the individual, and thus apotheosized. Men may die, but Man will




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live forever, under the care of the heavenly host: Science, Progress, Enlightenment, Evolution, Revolution, and all the angels on high. Man, made priest of creation through Nature's selection, shall rule the very cosmos. Men "shall be as gods."

This is most curious. We see we are, as it were, god-ridden or god-fueled. The most resolute efforts by Rational Atheist Societies and Militant Atheist Leagues succeed only in producing weird new faiths of their own. It appears literally impossible for us to believe in nothing. Without an absolute standard of Good, we have no way to discern between better and worse; our life

loses all direction; we can't think at all. Our minds just don't work that way. Yet if we are, as the anti-hero insists, purely natural creatures in a purely natural universe, how could a god concept have possibly arisen at all? Nothing like this is observable in Nature, nor could it ever be in a purely material cosmos. When we look at Nature with the eyes of beasts, we see only Nature. Only when we look at her with the eyes of men, with reverence and wonder and intelligence, do we see spirit. And we see the workings of the divine. The god concept is common to us all, and nags us all unmercifully. Where did it come



from, if not from our Creator? How else could it be that our minds will not function without a god figure? Surely it is clear we carry within us a divine spark, else we could not conceive these matters, much less long to be "as gods." One is reminded of the first moment we did see ourselves with the eyes of men, as related in the creation story in *Genesis*. There occurs one of the most striking passages in mythology—and as we'll see, I do not use "mythology" to mean "false." (We may think of *Genesis* as fanciful, but next to all other creation myths it is as prosaic as a newspaper report.) When Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." (my emphasis) Their first act "as gods" was to get dressed—imagine! All people of all times have worn clothes, and it is one of those maddening details about this strange beast, man, that defies

### About the Author

George Roche has served as president of Hillsdale College since 1971 and in the last 16 years has attracted international attention for his founding of the Center for Constructive Alternatives, the Hillsdale College Press, *IMPRIMIS*, the Ludwig von Mises Lecture Series, and the Shavano Institute for National Leadership, as well as for his battle in the courts to protect the school from federal intrusion. (Despite the fact that Hillsdale has never accepted federal funds, the Supreme Court has challenged Hillsdale's independence.)

*Firing Line*, the *McNeil-Lehrer Report*, *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, *Reader's Digest*, *Time*, the *Today Show*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and scores of other television, radio, magazine, and newspaper sources have chronicled his efforts.

Formerly the presidentially-appointed chairman of the National Council on Educational Research, the director of seminars at the Foundation for Economic Education in New York, and a professor of history at the Colorado School of Mines, George Roche is also the author of eight books on education, history, philosophy and government, including *America by the Throat: The Stranglehold of Federal Bureaucracy* (1985), his first novel, *Going Home* (1986), and, most recently, *A World Without Heroes: The Modern Tragedy* (1987).

materialist theories. Here, allegorically, at the beginning of our career in the god business, what we saw was our fall and our shame. No evolution myth can give us half so good an account of ourselves.

And that is a prime clue to our nature, this everlasting temptation "to be as gods, knowing good and evil." Is it not just this that impels the anti-hero to dethrone God and deify himself? Anti-heroism centers in rebellion against all religion, and against Christianity particularly. Yet anti-heroes, as all other men, must have a god concept. The philosophical inquirer will always find it rewarding to ask what god a man will

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believe in, if he won't believe in the Creator. It is ever instructive to see what the anti-hero will believe, in order to disbelieve in God. We therefore ask here: With what god does the anti-hero displace the Almighty? To what faith or faiths does he cling?

The investigator would find many. There is a pantheism, made to look new and modern whereas it is as old as man, dressed in the conceit that it is more spiritual and refined than the old faiths, when it is merely so diluted and empty as to be no faith at all. What Professor Voegelin terms gnosticism, which in simplest terms is the reduction of complex reality to *gnosis*, formulas, with neither reverence nor understanding, is a permanent lure for the anti-heroic mind. But it is a trap, egotism posing as knowledge, and its fruits are bitter. There is "alienism," too, in Joseph Sobran's coinage, a sort of holy rejection of the normal and enduring foundations of civilization, a rejection of the center in favor of the abnormal, the outsiders, the minorities and supposed victims. And many more. We need not examine all the curious faiths of the anti-hero. A close look at a few will do. But it may be said: Wherever the doctrine that "religion is irrelevant," or worse, is voiced or implied, you have found the influence of anti-heroic faith.

### Naturalism

The view that Nature is "the whole show" and "all there is" is as old as mankind. The polytheism of the ancients was a form of naturalism, for the gods were not believed to exist outside Nature and were not creators of the world.

In modern times, infused with the findings of a growing science in the West, naturalism has become immensely influential in all our lives. All anti-heroes cleave strongly to naturalism, whether through a scientific basis or unexamined premise about the nature of reality.

Let us attempt a definition. Nature, in this view, is the interlocking system of the physical universe. The natural is what comes forth or goes on of its own accord, spontaneously, unasked. All finite events are part of the system, and nothing exists outside of Nature. Nature is thus the Ultimate Fact, the self-existent thing, on

which all phenomena depend and of which all phenomena are a part. In our own century, the physical universe has been given a highly specific shape and size by Einstein's equations, and beyond it is nothing—not infinite empty space but literal nothingness. Everything in space and time is part of Nature.

The contrapositive view may be called supernaturalism: The belief that the Ultimate Fact upon which all depends is in some manner above and beyond Nature, out of space and time, and is the Creator of the universe. This view is likewise as old as mankind. But let us limit it here to the Western view of God, other forms of supernaturalism being irrelevant to this discussion.

The argument today, as of old, is who is right, the naturalist or the supernaturalist? This may seem far removed from practical concerns, but there could hardly be any more important concern—or any more down-to-earth. To abridge a famous remark by Chesterton, "There are some people, and I am one of them, who . . . think the question is not whether the theory of the cosmos affects matters, but whether, in the long run, anything else affects them." For, of course, if we believe life is a purely natural event determined by a purely natural cosmos, our institutions and customs and personal lives will be shaped by that view, and will be totally unlike life built upon belief in God. Indeed, the whole story of the past two centuries is the remolding of Western life under the growing reach of naturalism.

The naturalist view is completely determinist. That is, all "events" interlock, and



all are the result of previous events in an unbroken chain of cause-and-effect going back to the beginning of things. Thus no serious naturalist believes in human free will. If our will were more than an illusion, we would actually be introducing "new" events, without previous cause, into Nature's system (and without her say-so). This would put us outside the system, dictating to Nature instead of obeying her, so it is not possible under naturalism. This means you literally have no choice about reading these words at this moment; your doing so was, as it were, determined by the stars. Nor have I any choice in what I'm writing, being merely a stenographer for what is dictated by the dance of the atoms. Consequently, if I were to write that all naturalists were ugly useless cockroaches, the naturalist would have to agree that Nature herself forced me to say so. But would it mean anything? Of course not. For the same reason, the statements naturalists seem to make in apparent defense of naturalism are illusions, written by Nature, without meaning. Yet they seem to believe their own babble. Why?

Kindred difficulties—which is to say, impossible contradictions—await us if we look at the naturalist view of thought and morality. The rigorous naturalist claims that human reason is also an illusion, and thought a meaningless secretion of the brain gland. Any other interpretation would allow human reasons, again impermissibly, to overrule Nature and change the system from outside. And because amoral Nature is the cause of all events, all human morality is disallowed; it is deemed another illusion. There are no such things as good and evil, right and wrong; any contrary opinion is leftover superstition from a pre-scientific age.

Step by rigorous step, the naturalist thus denies our human qualities, but each time ignoring the contradictions that leave the theory of naturalism in ruins. Contriving the theory has required a great deal of thought and the finest scientific reasoning: Only to conclude that thought and reason are meaningless. If the conclusion is correct, the theory is nonsense and no one need believe it. If the conclusion is false, it is just that, false, the theory is again nonsense. To unblinded eyes, the naturalist chose the career that led him to conclude that choice is impossible. Why, then, should his apparent choice make any difference to anybody? Finally, he denies all morality in one breath, and exhorts us all to become naturalists in his next—for the good of mankind.

Naturalism, looked at philosophically rather than through the truncated thought of science, insults the intelligence. I do not see how its theorists, even if their minds are epiphenomenal, can stand building a world view on blatant contradictions.

A few years ago several theorists launched something called kin theory, stating that instances of "cooperative" or "altruistic" (how would scientists form such a concept?) behavior are genetically determined, according to the nearness of transmissible genes. Roughly stated, we are more likely to do something nice for our own offspring than for our second cousin's children, and not at all likely to be nice to a neighbor's dog. Now, I don't know the gentlemen and have no idea whether they are naturalists of the sort we have been discussing. However, this is the sort of theory naturalists love to seize on and apply to human behavior with little or no evidence (the study in question concerned insects). If the theory applies to us, it means that Lenny Skutnik would almost surely not have dived into the Potomac to rescue a stranger a few years ago; but he did. Surely it must mean that no humans would ever risk their lives to rescue drowning cats; but they do. The error of naturalism lies in equating insects with people, on ignoring the rule, "one law for men, another for things."

would be mischievous to wonder whether, if thought is so useless, Harvard oughtn't throw open its admissions to all students? Or just close shop? (Pardon me, my limbic system made me say that.)

After we see the fundamental fallacy of naturalism, there is nothing more to be said to its adherents, and only one more thing to be said of the theory. Namely, it is a blunder of unbelievable cost at the center of the great tragedy of our era. In denying our humanity, it has made us brutes. In denying God and all moral authority, it has delivered us into the coercive power of the unlimited parasitic state. In rejecting a moral order, it has torn the restraints off mass war, off political genocide and persecution, and off crime. Under its malign influence, the values of life, liberty, property and family have been under constant assault and gravely damaged. In a word, naturalism is a weapon in the hands of the anti-hero intent on bringing down all civilization.

You see, it really does matter, and matters very much, how we think about the cosmos.

### New Myths for Old

Albert Jay Nock once remarked that he would almost pin his hopes for the hereafter on a chance to talk with Socrates, Rabelais and Jefferson. Given the chance, I think I'd choose to eavesdrop on

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Harvard sociobiologist Edward Wilson affirmed (*On Human Nature*, 1979) that "life and mind have a physical basis," and that the "minimum claims" of evolutionary theory are that the behavioral and social sciences have to be "consistent" with the laws of physical science, and "linked in chains of causal explanation." Wherewith we learn that, "The emotional control centers in the hypothalamas and limbic systems of the brain which flood our consciousness with all the emotions" used by "ethical philosophers" in perceiving "standards of good and evil." Mind is "an epiphenomenon of the brain," secreting the meaningless illusion of thought. Bravo! My hypothalamus and limbic systems this very moment are flooding my epiphenomenon with the delightful, albeit meaningless, thought that thought is meaningless. It

a conversation between Hugo Dyson, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis at Magdalen College, Oxford, on September 19, 1931. All three of these brilliant scholars felt that something remarkable occurred that evening, and were moved to write about it later. Tolkien didn't leave until 3:00 a.m. Dyson and Lewis, still pumped up, walked and talked till dawn broke. The conversation was a turning point for Lewis, and in this one may say that it has changed the world. Lewis, once an outspoken atheist, had only shortly before become "the most reluctant convert in all England." But he had gone no further than theism, merely intellectual acceptance of an Absolute Being. But as he wrote his close lifetime friend, Arthur Greeves, a few days later, ". . . I have just passed on from believing in God to definitely believing in Christ—in Christiani-



ty . . . My long night talk with Dyson and Tolkien had a good deal to do with it." Thereafter, and for the rest of his life, Lewis was, of course, an outstanding Christian apologist, perhaps the greatest of our time. Something remarkable surely *did* occur that evening.

The subject that so excited their interest is not one we would be likely to guess. It is one the anti-hero would greet with a yawn or dismiss with rationalist scorn. If we ourselves pay scant heed to it, that marks another victory for the anti-hero. But if the conversation at Magdalen is any

dictionary. In Webster's Second Unabridged (c. 1930), "mythical" still meant simply "based on myth." In the Third Edition (c. 1960), the synonym given for mythical is "fictitious," and among the definitions is ". . . ignorantly or willingly without facts or in defiance of facts." Myth has become a lie, and an almost malicious, reactionary lie at that.

And that is the odd thing. Why would anyone labor to prove that myths aren't true? Myths are flights of fancy, daydreams, fairy tales. They were never meant to be taken literally. Only poets can make them,

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measure, we may be missing something important or even profound. The subject was mythology: that tattered, much-debunked, remnant of truth robed in the imagination and fables and poetry of the ancient world.

To the modern mind, demythologization perhaps marks the triumph of science over "superstition." But myths were common to all people, and remain so to all but the enlightened Westerner. Can we be so sure they did not have reference to a deep yearning in our own nature? And can we be certain we have not replaced them with new gods, new superstitions, and a new mythology in our own style that we do not see as such? It seems to me little better than an anti-hero conceit that all that "old stuff" was nonsense, and that we are ever so much smarter than our ancestors. It is surely unfair to label as "myth" something we mean to call false.

It is by no means my point that we all ought to rush out and buy a copy of *Bullfinch's Mythology*; and even less that we should literally believe the old stories. Even the ancients did not believe them in the same sense that, say, the monotheist believes in God. My point, rather, is to find out what they were all about, and what they tell us about ourselves. For this, our hearing must be respectful: We learn nothing by scoffing. We also want to know why the anti-hero is so insistently skeptical of myths. Could he somehow feel threatened by old yarns of giants and feathered snakes and Olympian beings? This would indeed be curious. Yet I did a little checking, and found that the anti-hero view of mythology has made it into the

and they can only be appreciated artistically. Some are good, some childish, some funny, and some approach profound art (as in Greek tragedies). They show every degree of skill, of mind, and of imagination that humans possess. But always they are art, the songs of poets and mystics, to be enjoyed in symbol and wonder; to be understood, if at all, by not trying to understand them. A myth loses all its delight the moment some academic spoilsport says, "This is what it means." The anti-hero not only says this, but adds that the myth is a lie.

Arianna Stassinopoulos, one of the most gifted young minds of our time, warns us that the anti-hero's "war against imagination is complete. Yet imagination is man's most princely faculty—the one that most sharply distinguishes him from other creatures. It is imagination which gives meaning and value to our experience, which both discerns mystery and brings comprehension and order to the world." "It may," she adds, "seem absurd to 'the modern mind,' but a great part of political history is purely symbolic. The Bastille, when it was taken, was not a horrible prison—it was hardly a prison at all. (It was found to contain only seven old men who were annoyed at being disturbed.) But it was a symbol and its destruction was the breaking of a stone image." Hence to judge the incident by its almost ludicrous facts would be to destroy one of our better modern myths, "the storming of the Bastille."

What we learn from myths is not that there are giants with one eye, or that the cow jumped over the moon, or even that

the Bastille held only seven old men. We learn that men are poets and mystics moved by the mysteries of life and the divine powers of nature. We learn that we who are human yearn to share in the mysteries about us, yearn to add meaning to mystery by personalizing it, yearn to finish the tales. Always our myths bespeak our wonder that Nature is, precisely, unnatural, a thing touched somehow by divinity. Should the story tell us, said Chesterton, that when we pluck a certain flower a princess in a castle across the sea will die, a thing impossible seems almost inevitable; our imagination accepts it before cold reason can say nay. Scientific literalism may sneer that this defies the laws of Nature, but cannot explain why our heart leaps and our blood pounds. In truth, the Nature we are part of is larger and far more beautiful than is seen by the anti-hero literalist. Pity the sad soul who must regard a tale in "scientific" terms, for this is the only way it can be completely misunderstood. Adds Chesterton, ". . . he who has no sympathy with myths has no sympathy with men."

The one thing we can say about myths is that they are not lies. Myths are men's stories, a common heritage of all peoples. They have always been—until the rise of the anti-hero—a reflection of something very deep in our nature, and a common source, in symbolic language, of the transcendent truths that bind us in human society. Who, except in a truly natural, wonderless world, would say that a tale is nonsense and that dreams cannot come true? But if we inhabited such a world, men themselves would have been wonderless things, unable ever to spin myths. And here we see what this odd dispute about mythology is really about. Mythology has always had religious overtones, reflecting the quest of man's soul for its rightful home. This the anti-hero must ruthlessly suppress. There is no scrap of room in his lonely cosmos for anything unnatural or divine. No hint of the miraculous or even the imaginative may intrude. But the anti-hero's "scientific" literalism gives us a world far too prosaic for our spirit, our imagination, our humanness—and we hate it. We are forever unhappy in it. It gives us nothing but earthbound appetites when we long to soar above ourselves. All our great mythmakers know better than this, and give us wings for starlit skies.

The argument is ever thus between the would-be rationalist and the poet who likens a skylark's flight to a rose in thick foliage. The prosaic mind can claim that



there is no comparison between them, and in a way this is true, or rather half-true. But is it all we want of life that a skylark may be no more to us than a bird, species *Alauda arvensis*? This is what Dyson, Tolkien and Lewis were arguing about: the truth of myth and metaphor.

The other side of our story is that the anti-hero, human despite his own protestations, is a prolific spinner of myths himself. Given his stunted and bloodless view of life, his myths are usually pretty awful, but there is no doubting the breed. Real Deities, announced in capital letters, parade around and do all manner of weird things among themselves, or to Man. In the myth of Historical Determinism, the goddess History moves forward in stages, carrying us to ever higher states of society, until we embrace the heavenly Socialism in the end. History's sister, Economy, likewise determines that Capitalism (an evil god indeed) will be overcome by Socialism in time. There are swarms of deities in the anti-hero's pantheon, all perfect and quite impervious to human frailty. The Presidency, Democracy, the Working Class, Higher Education, the Environment, the Girl Scouts—there is no end of them, all immortal, all beyond sin. Hence, the Presidency survived Nixon and lives on. Economy was ravaged by Inflation, but will recover. Every human group or institution is personified as a deity ("the White House said today. . ."), and every tale told about them is a true myth, as real to modern listeners as the doing of Greek gods were to the Greeks. Except we have far more deities and tell far more myths about them than the ancients. The only reason we do not see all this as superstitious in the extreme is that we have discarded the art of making *good* myths, and rebuked the sense of reverence that wells deep within us. All we have left is a horde of wretched ideological myths, redoubled in number to make up for their almost total lack of art. We see again, in our petty appeals to the goddesses Ecology, Natural Selection, Improving Technology and all the rest, how profound was the warnings that if we will not believe in true myth, we will believe in anything. No more today than in the ancient world can the human mind get along without reaching for the divine.

Only one of the anti-hero's myths seems to me to have any beauty or depth to it; so perhaps it is the most central and deeply felt. No, not the myths of Revolution's struggle to create Heaven on Earth: that one is appallingly ugly. The pretty one is

Nature By Herself. It starts no more strangely than pagan tales of giants cleft in two or she-bears carrying the stars in a box *before* creation. "In the beginning, there was a large agglomeration of neutrons that Big Banged." It is the tale of expanding mat-

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ter, adrift within literal nothingness, with stars dying and supernovae collapsing to give us the heavier elements that make life possible, leading to Man's anointment as priest of Nature Herself. It's all familiar, so we needn't recount the details, nor even deny that it may be true in detail. Besides, our delight in myth does not lie in true details. Who could not love this wild, menacing, life-giving, mysterious, hilarious goddess Nature; this changeless, ever-changing cascade of shapes and forms and lines and colors and perceptions, this torrent of kangaroos and volcanoes and rainbows and skylarks and giggling brooks and slimy things and sunsets and stars pinpricking the night? We fear her but adore her, Nature, this wild and wonderful thing, and cannot bear for her to be tamed, a mere created thing ruled by some god. One would be hard of heart not to rejoice in a myth so grand.

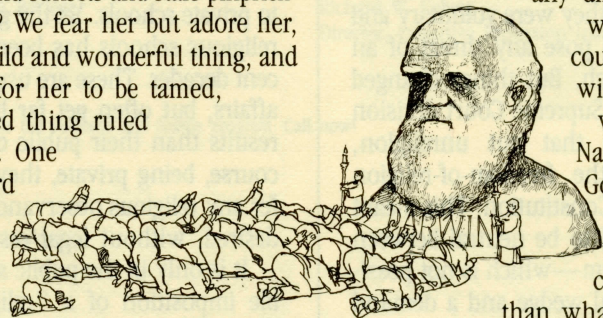
I grew up in the Colorado wild country, love it still, and hate to obtrude a prosaic thought into so charming a myth. But that's not how things are. The reality is even better. We have all of Nature to love, but there is more. Look around you. Do you see anything really natural? The room, its furnishings, your clipped nails, the paper these words are printed upon in your hands, every sentence you are reading which results from human choice—these are all triumphs of man's mind and will over Nature in the raw. Indeed, every fact of civilization is unnatural. All this bespeaks a differentness that we have ourselves introduced into a formerly pristine Nature. You and I certainly prefer these triumphs; else we would be outside shivering, perhaps dying, on what is, as I write, a bitter cold night. Would we think Nature so wonderful if we were crouched in the

snow, naked as all other creatures, temperatures below zero? If we are no more than children of Nature, we could not change her. But we do. No more striking example of this exists than in the laboratories of our scientists, who can

transmute the very elements, turn lead into gold with fission power, or even create *new* elements. We applaud ourselves for these achievements. But wild Nature offers no such gifts to her own. The reality is that human mind and spirit and will are things not of Nature, but that have invaded her from within, partly for good, partly for ill. I must ask: Would the wild and wonderful Nature of myth change one iota if we ourselves changed our concept of her origin? Is she any less marvelous if we suppose her to be a creature of God, obeying the laws we fancy so much but attribute to her instead of to God—would she be any different because of what we think? Of course not. The sun will rise in the east whether we think Nature a creature of God or self-sprung. Yet, in another sense, nothing could matter more than what we think about Nature. The moment we start seeing ourselves as her creatures alone, we start losing our human, yet extra-natural, ability to take delight in this strange goddess. Purely natural things have no awe, no poetry, no joy, no myths. Insofar as we subsume ourselves into the Myth of Nature By Herself, we forfeit the human sense wherewith we could have adored Nature as the ancients did. I count that another tragedy of a world without heroes: that we lose even our naturalness along with our humanness.

### Sterilization of the Public Square

The role of religion in public life has been debated and fought almost continuously since the Scopes Trial in 1925. Tiffs erupt periodically in the press, or in political debates. Not a Christmas passes but that a civil liberties group will





sue to prevent some unenlightened community from putting a creche in the public square. Every year, a few state legislatures will try to find a way around the Supreme Court's ban on prayer in public schools.

Amid the rumbles is the anti-hero's unwavering conviction that public affairs must be sterilized of all taint of religion. This is as much a policy question as a philosophical one, but it is worth a brief look here. At the root, of course, is the anti-hero's faith that all religion is meaningless. But at the policy level, a suspiciously human quality creeps in, for instance the moral thought that public schoolchildren should not be forcibly subjected to anything untrue. (Anti-heroes keep acting like moral beings despite themselves.) And with this, with an appeal to fair play, they can enlist the aid of their victims: anyone opposed to the total secularization of school curricula or of other aspects of public life.

We all agree, after all, that the State apparatus should be strictly neutral as between all sects and religions. This is in the Constitution; but so is a provision that the State may not impede freedom of worship in any way. For most of our national history, no great problem was seen with minor religious observances in public affairs, so long as they were voluntary and did not appear to pose any threat of an official state church. But things changed drastically with a Supreme Court decision thirty years ago that put unreligion, atheism, under the freedom-of-religion guarantees of the Constitution. This meant that the State had to be neutral between religion and atheism—which is not possible. With this legal wedge and a demand for fairness, anti-heroes have pretty well driven religious observance of any sort out of public life, especially public schools. And they have lawyers on 24-hour call ready to sue should there be any further outbreak of worship. Under present law, schoolchildren cannot look at the Ten Commandments in school, or read the Bible even as literature, or have a religious club after school (communist clubs are allowed), much less pray.

But the anti-heroes are cheating. They are forcibly imposing anti-religious values on most of the nation's schoolchildren, and in very large doses. Public school curricula, strongly influenced and often controlled by anti-heroic academics, are awash in naturalist explanations of life, and the denial of moral values. Courses in the sciences, especially the social sciences, are often taught as outrightly hostile to

religion. The State, constitutionally required to be neutral, is anything but fair in practice. Somewhere in its bowels, it knows the anti-hero doctrines being taught expand its own power and prestige, and indeed, breed

and real and well-known to us, and we all see the damage done them by anti-heroism. I'll say again, it matters very much, and in our immediate affairs, how we think about the universe.

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new generations of docile, subservient taxpayers to be bled for its own advantage.

In short, the large majority of parents who do not want their children subjected to anti-religious teaching are being bullied and abused by law, by the anti-hero minority. Most cannot afford to do much about it. After being taxed to pay for the public schools whose policies they object to, they haven't the resources to send their children to private schools. Yet the growth of private religious schools has been striking in recent decades. These are usually low-budget affairs, but often get far better scholastic results than their public counterparts. Of course, being private, they are free to offer any religious observance or instruction desired, without legal restrictions.

It is only in the public sector that forcible imposition of a “religious” view is causing a headache, and part of the problem is that the public sector is growing like a toadstool, making the headache worse. Between the grating relativism taught and the sub-mediocre academic results achieved in public schools, it's no wonder a revolt is brewing. For the first time in our history the value of public schooling is being sharply called into question. Serious alternatives (such as the voucher system) are being considered to let parents choose the education they want for their children. For most of us, a way out can't come soon enough.

This is the anti-hero's legacy to our schools.

It is important that we see it here, close to home. The influence of fancy philosophical dogmas on great events far away can seem too distant and abstract for us to grasp. But our public schools are close

### Reflections

“When the men of science have said all their say about the human mind and heart,” wrote Albert Jay Nock, “how far they are from accounting for all their phenomena, or from answering the simple, vital questions that one asks them! What is the power by which a certain number and order of air vibrations is translated into processes of great emotional significance? If anyone can answer that question believe me, he is just the man I want to see.”

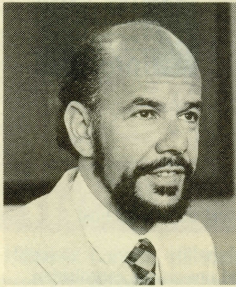
And just the man the world wants to see. Science, for all its brilliance, is blind to the things that matter most to us, in our hearts and minds and souls. Its genius has been our downfall. For two hundred years and more, men have placed their faith and hope in scientific advance, dazzled by its success and certitude. But to do so, we must put aside our very humanity, for that part of us is forever veiled to scientific inquiry. This is the mistake of the anti-hero, seeing the natural side of us that needed no explaining, and ignoring our spiritual side, nay, denying it with scorn. Let it not be said of his doctrine: “It can't all be wrong. It must have some truth to it, to make such an immense impact on the world. Where there's smoke, there's fire.” It is all wrong, and its results show it. It got its power from the seeming perfection of natural science in times long gone, science now obsolete. But anti-heroism is not science, it is philosophy built on flawed perceptions of scientific findings, and on some false findings at that. It deals in ideas,

(continued on page 8)



# ACTION-2000

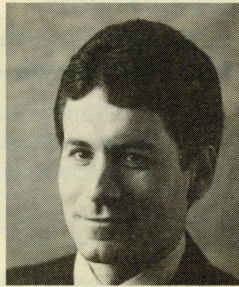
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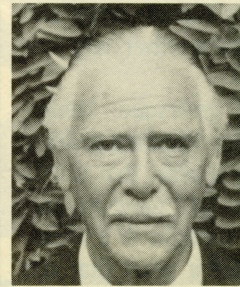
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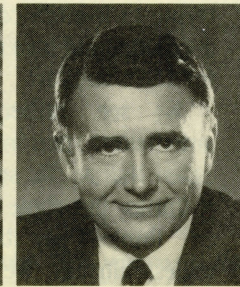
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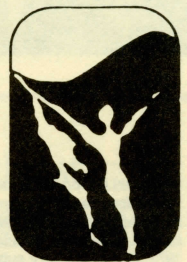
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not science, and its ideas must be judged by their truth.

In looking at the curious faiths of the anti-hero, we do not see ourselves. We do not see men. We do not see real people trying to live life on a human scale, and get along, and love one another, and care for their families.

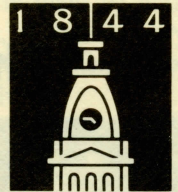
We see, rather, grotesque beings, automatons spun by an uncaring goddess called Nature. We see a beast that thinks it thinks, but some of its "most advanced" thinkers say its thought is a meaningless illusion. We see a beast that acts as if it could act, but has no will to do so. We see a beast that aches in its soul to be good, but has no soul and inhabits a place that has no good. We see a beast that cries out in joy when an imaginary dragon is slain, and weeps real tears when an imaginary princess is felled by an imaginary flower; yet one having no imagination or spirit.

There is no such beast. We are human creatures of a loving God, who take joy in life and grow in His spirit, or not at all.

IMPRIMIS (im-pri-mes), taking its name from the Latin term for "in the first place," is the publication of Hillsdale College's Center for Constructive Alternatives and the Shavano Institute for National Leadership. Circulation 130,000 worldwide, established 1972. Complimentary subscriptions available.

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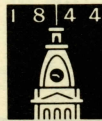
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