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L'Essai d'Edgar Z. Friedenberg

The prevalence of *ressentiment* seems to me to make it absurd and sentimental to suppose that liberty will ever be a popular cause in a modern industrialist society, whether that society be socialist or capitalist. Most citizens despise the very idea of idiosyncratic and personal self-expression as the very essence of privilege, and expect the bitter disciplines of adult life to stamp such tendencies out if the schools fail to do so. And, of course, they are right.¹

Over the course of the last three decades, the social commentary of Edgar Z. Friedenberg has remained a matter of indomitable method and concern. While the academic discipline known as the sociology of education has been his stock in trade, his avocation has been the artful defence of the individual at liberty among the rites of the many. In the earlier work, the schools appear as the persistent expression of a larger social malaise, of a tension between rites and liberties, which continues to pervade this society. Though he did go on to pursue the cause of liberty through a broad range of subjects, he has continued to return to the nature of life in the school as the test case for what we intend with our ideals and ideologies. Yet in that return, his concerns have shifted, moving from a psychology of interrupted integrity to a politics of threatened liberty. The shift is marked by gains, constants, and losses. His work has broadened considerably in scope, while the forcefulness and sensitivity of his argument has been relentlessly maintained. Still, in turning from the fate of the student to that of the world at large, he has failed to reach as many or as deeply, even as he seeks to speak to more.

This essay attempts to explore one dimension in the particular meeting of avocation and vocation in Friedenberg's work; it proposes that his abiding intellectual fervour is the element which distinguishes his work, a fervour which distinguishes the nature of his scholarly contribution as a writerly practice and sense of responsibility. During the three decades since the publications of *The Vanishing Adolescent*, Friedenberg's work has developed beyond the schoolyard which

served as the original centre for what he always tended to transcend; the same can be said for his fidelity to the scholarly methods of his academic training. Even as he participated in the production of systematic research in the study of education, his prose relentlessly escaped the predictable patterns of this mode of discourse. Though his concerns expanded, he maintained a certain constancy clever and caustic in his formulation of the educational dilemma. He has altered, if not always, with the times, moving from a concern with the healthy development of the individual into a struggle for the political possibility of a distinct individuality. Still, the question remains of where does this transcendental harping, this pursuit on behalf of the individual who would diverge, who would defy, lead after this long career of working it this way and that. What happens to the blend of art and science which animates the scholarship? What did it ask then and what does it ask now?

Friedenberg has remained a writer who tends to thoroughly please or infuriate, as his argument runs strongly and on occasion falters. His rhetorical manner is marked in one way above all others: the discomfiting metaphor worked to the point of hyperbole. These metaphorical explications, especially as they are brought to bear on the school, are rarely cheery or ingratiating. To great effect, he has likened the school to the nineteenth-century Colonial Office, abdominal surgery, the minimum-security prison, and the very highway to hell. He suggests at one point that the school bears a striking resemblance to the terminal waiting room—"It combines the costly, well-appointed discomfort of the airport terminal with the atmosphere of the bus station."² On other occasions, however, the school can bring to mind an abattoir and in such a manner as to approach a metaphysical conceit. Consider this excerpt from the playing out of the abattoir metaphor before a "Needs Assessment Conference" sponsored by the Ontario Teachers' Federation.

Our efforts to bring about education reform in order to eliminate the inequities we found in the schools seems to me, in retrospect, rather as if we had published the mortality rates among healthy cattle in an abattoir of Swift or Armour Canada Limited, of course and exclaimed in horror: "This place is a shambles" So it is; and management, had it been asked, would have admitted it with mild astonishment that anyone could have thought otherwise. I would not, I think, have defended the slaughterhouse as an institution designed to enhance, or even equalize, economic opportunity among the processed animals there. Yet it does, of course

...
 Schools do not, of course, terminate the lives of their pupils. They are not as bloody as abattoirs; so one should, perhaps, be less sanguine about them.³

This hard sort of play with language and ideas is undeniably aggressive and, in part, self-congratulatory, just as it is intentionally offensive and sensational. But is it all of that simply for effect? I tend to think so. Reporting the numerous statistical studies on the school's consistently dismal contribution to social mobility over the course of this century may have made the point more palatable or easier. Easier to swallow, but it would have turned few heads. Friedenbergs's creative restatement of these findings conveys much the same information, yet goes on to capture his mood, his own frustration with the smug intransigence of his fellow educators and, indeed, plays roughly with it. He might have been more polite about it in front of his kind hosts, but he could not have done as much to shake these teachers or have been as honest with them.

In this manner, Friedenbergs provides a social psychology of the school which, while it incorporates much from the scholarly literature of the field, still manages to realize a whole different form of validity and reliability through the literary device, through a language and story which works from a much older authority than the recent human sciences. His argument for the possibilities of youth and human liberty had been originally fashioned out of the instances of Freud, Fromm and Henry Stack Sullivan in psychology, and out of Howard Becker, Christopher Jencks, and David Riesman in sociology. He later turned to Michael Apple and Paul Willis when a neo-marxist sociology of education began to mount the most telling critique of the schools; but he also stuck by a great many lesser-known scholarly figures whose work he helped to disseminate. Yet his scholarly argument is also tightly made out of Homer, Dante, Oscar Wilde, and T.S. Eliot. He uses Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to illuminate the limitations of Fromm's psychology, and when he needs a simile to capture those long days in school, he turns to Rebecca West's reflections on the bookish shape of the good life: "If one's experience has no form," she states, "if the events do not come readily to mind and disclose their significance, we feel about ourselves as if we are reading a bad book." He finds in her words the acute measure of the high school: "I have found the life of the high school to be, in this respect very often like a bad book; sentimental, extrinsically motivated, emotionally and intellectually dishonest."⁴ In other instances, he builds subtlety and fine distinction into his reasoning by illuminating his argument with the lyrics of W.S. Gilbert, Bob Dylan and Pink Floyd. But his work on the school, even as it dips into the arts, classic and popular, also never loses sight of *The New York Times* and the evening news. Throughout his work you can find the lessons of Viet Nam and Nicaragua, of Supreme Court deci-

sions and legislative enactments, in his search for the school's place in things.

His study of education maintains a cultural sensitivity and rhetorical finesse which bridges academic scholarship with the American essayist tradition of Emerson, though he runs more to Thoreau in temperament, or, in more contemporary terms, to Lionel Trilling and Paul Goodman. This rhetorical tradition might be described as blending its argument out of three elements: a certain critical authority—Emerson and his clericalism, Friedenbergs sociology of education—along with an appeal to a shared cultural sensibility of common texts, which is then underwritten by the moral authority of crucial issues clearly perceived and felt. But even as the essay draws the reader in with these familiar tunes well-played, even as it tugs deeper through this call to the cultural heights, this tradition feels its obligation to raise the overlooked and uncomfortable matters of a society moving hastily along, matters which as often as not entail elements of dignity, integrity and other aspects of the good life. Friedenbergs work, in stepping out of and beyond the traditional formats of scholarly discourse, is unapologetic in its culturally enriched, morally indignant criticism of the school; it offers the force of an articulate sensibility moved with remarkable lucidity to, in turn, bemusement, compassion, and outrage.

One strength of the Friedenbergs essay in its critical regard for the school, I would argue, is that it clearly grows out of the culture and language which it would preserve as part of its educational mission. That quality of literature which the school would defend, at least in principle, is the source and expression of the values which Friedenbergs reveres in the student, though with ambivalence at times, and would protect from the school. He demonstrates what it means to be educated in something approaching a traditional, literate sense with all of its incumbent concerns for the individual's plight in a mass society, a sense which often eludes the state of free and compulsory education. From the top of the English class, one might say, he exhibits the much-desired, supple prose style, along with a strong discriminating sense of the shoddy and pretentious. What distinguishes his analysis from much of the critical work in educational research is that he speaks what might be imagined to be the school's language, as if it is to be the centre of this culture's educational enterprise. Seeming to share the language and the concern of public education, he is appalled by the forces within the school that would deny what ostensibly it would embrace and encourage along with him.

But for all of that, Friedenbergs has remained a man of two cultures, drawing on what might be distinguished as the literate and the academic. The breadth of his interest reminds us that a certain narrowness

of vision, a certain adherence to the rigors of technique, can leave research into education separate from a genuine intellectual concern, can leave it isolated from the cultural milieu beyond the scope of the research instrument. Friedenberg's earlier research on the attitudes of high school and undergraduate students was conducted with all of the necessary rigors of subject selection and statistical measurement, using such techniques as the Sentence Completion Test and Q-technique. When the results of these research technologies were worked into his books, however, they were immersed in the richness of his ability to make sense of what the young had managed to express on these various instruments. The question that might be asked is whether the hard findings of these measures were buried by the quickness of the apparently soft but always cutting commentary. Friedenberg was amused by the perceptive observation of one critic that in his book *Coming of Age in America*, based in part on students' sorting of statements (Q-technique), the research seems almost a superfluous accoutrement to the surrounding argument.

While the original study was rigorously reported elsewhere, in *Coming of Age*, Friedenberg used the findings as a scaffold from which to build the tower of his apprehensions and hopes for the moral development of American youth.⁵ It might be added that his later work was neither so encumbered nor supported. But then, too, it was to be less often peopled with the likes of Thomas or Mr. D., the high school students whose forthright responses are read by Friedenberg with a great knowingness in the early books:

Thomas regards his body as capital goods that had somehow come under his control. As a physical operation he is superb and knows it. His body earns him all the satisfactions he gets: status, victory, recognition, what he calls love. . . . It seems nearly all he possesses. He exploits it, he takes good care of it, but it does not seem to have occurred to him that he could live in it himself.⁶

One might suppose that in leaving behind the narrow, barren school corridors and his conversations with students like Thomas, much might be gained in return by the emerging breadth of vision in Friedenberg's work. But in taking up the case beyond the school, and moving further into the realm of social criticism and political science, his urgent defence of civil liberties can be found to lack the same degree of embodiment. The illustrative examples which he then used in this work are drawn from across the social scene, even as he would make his case that the threat is ubiquitous. But his focus of concern no longer had a singular and imaginative home in the life of a few individual adolescents who formed the core and contributed a great deal to the

character of the earlier books. Yet he did not lose the rhetorical force of the telling instance in this shift to the governing institutions of the adult world the legislature and the courts:

The best evidence I know of that heterodoxy of opinion or behaviour is not really cherished in Canadian society is to be found in the statutes forbidding the publication of material that would be offensive to the community standards of typical Canadians the statute under which *The Body Politic* was prosecuted and acquitted, and prosecuted and acquitted, and prosecuted for publishing "Men Loving Boys Loving Men" It is against the law to tell Canadians anything they might really be shocked and offended by, no matter how important it may be or how true. Sex, as such, has nothing to do with the case.⁷

In the blend of literary and scholarly voices, Friedenberg stands apart from the traditional academic forms of discourse which tend to define and limit the voice and authority of the scholar in the educational community, as professors of education, for example, are notorious for failing to find a readership among those they would ostensibly move and serve. Of course, it would be difficult to establish to what degree Friedenberg's work has reached educators compared to the effectiveness of traditional educational research. Still, he began from a different concept of service and did not as often propose a handy educational solution for those who cannot help themselves. He is also the first to realize that the adolescents he champions are just those who would not readily take their cue from college dons, and for his vigorous defence of their interest he was careful to ask nothing in return. To the school personnel he seems so quick to admonish, he claimed to offer no more than a certain accuracy of description, an evocative rendering of intention and ambience which, as the opening epigraph for this essay suggests, he does not expect that they will gratefully receive in every instance.

Those teachers and academics made uncomfortable by his work most often take refuge in Friedenberg's seeming failure to proffer a solution, to outline the means of providing a new, improved form of schooling which might meet these scurrilous objections. In demanding of him a snappy program of improvement, educational advocates fail to realize both the profoundness of his objection to the nature of modern schooling and its fundamental simplicity: "Basically, I disapprove of compulsory school attendance in itself. I see no valid moral reasons to single out the young for his special legal encumbrance. The economic reasons are compelling enough; but they are likewise contemptible."⁸ Though Friedenberg finds this compulsion lacking in moral purpose, he is not about to deny school its special function: "The development of an inauthentic response to the circumstances of one's

life is the central function of compulsory schooling central in the sense that the more concrete and familiar economic and political consequences of schooling are in fact expressions of this inauthenticity.”⁹ The moral vigour of Friedenberg as essayist is to bring to bear the human consequence of institutional circumstance; it is to press our faces up against the implications of our comforting constructions.

But will he allow for a form of schooling beyond this antithetical element of compulsion? In *Coming of Age in America*, Friedenberg does put forward a suggestion for restructuring education based on the premise of voluntary participation with something approaching a voucher system, but a system that included, along with public and private schools, the addition of residential schools for those of the poor looking for an immersion course in a rather different way of life. Yet this relatively detailed proposal is the exception in his work, and, like Plato's *Republic*, one might say, it is far stronger in the explanatory power of the author's position and hopes rather than in its prescriptive promise as a blueprint for the future. The “highest function of education,” Friedenberg ventures later in his book, is to help “people understand the meaning of their lives and become more sensitive to the meaning of other people's lives and relate to them more fully.”¹⁰ This educational motif of reflecting on the meaning of life also figures in his essay “Society and the Therapeutic Function” but this time as the primary function he foresaw for psychotherapy.¹¹ Yet this progressive combination of a therapeutic and empathetic hope for education which figured in Friedenberg's work in the 1960s does not appear to have survived the 1970s. His prescription of an educational ideal for the students by the end of that decade is thoroughly *Realpolitik*: “Best of all, perhaps, you stay right in the school and sit in with your teacher at board meetings in which policy is made: pupils are given a desk in the principal's office and listen to what goes on there when a parent tries to come in with a complaint; the school paper fearlessly exposes the fiscal manipulations that keep the school going, thus learning about political responses at first hand.”¹²

If he has not always been able to convince committed educators to share their office space with students, he has at times also run into trouble with other critics who have taken up the issue of social justice in the schools. The weight of this educational critique in recent years has emerged from a reinvigorated left, while Friedenberg has continued to develop his civil libertarian critique. The distance, however, is not simply a matter of political philosophy. Even while supporting the insightfulness of the new left, Friedenberg has not hesitated to thump these colleagues for their very lack of his grace and lucidity. Consider his mixed review of Henry Giroux, from the rising new

school of neo-marxist sociology of education, and his book, *Ideology, Culture and the Process of Schooling*: "The very fact that nearly everything Giroux has to say in this book is both insightful and urgently significant makes his style infuriating; it seems a willful act of obscurantism and a betrayal of his own message."¹³ The *betrayal* of message is very much the point for both Giroux and Friedenberg; they are striving equally for a language which is loyal to the spirit of their concerns. When Giroux has on occasion had to defend his turgid neo-marxism from the attack of plain-speaking teachers, he does so on the grounds that it is the necessary vehicle for establishing a new, uncorrupted expression of ideas which can escape the dominant ideology. Though Giroux and Friedenberg might be said to seek a greater liberty from debilitating rites, they are bringing to bear different traditions of discourse. If Giroux would bump us ahead to a new language for a new age, Friedenberg would seem to keep us looking back "an aging romantic critic" is how he deprecates himself in his review of Giroux but looking back in order to maintain a cultural connection with an artistic, if not aristocratic, sensibility of individual dignity and integrity. Art is his vehicle, because art keeps an eye out for the past, even as it seems at times to rudely push too far ahead. It remains the well-spring for the idiosyncratic and independent intelligence.

Still, it should be pointed out that Friedenberg, in rejecting the rhetoric of the new left, has not turned his back on the social inequity which the school fosters rather than cures. But in his recognition of this problem, he has not based his case simply on a wronged working class. Again Friedenberg is remarkably lucid, if not blunt, about his interests: "I am not trying to be fair, or to identify and reward the most deserving, but to find educational means for sponsoring and nurturing more trustworthy and humane people than those among whom our lives now seem destined to be spent, and spent utterly."¹⁴ In this pursuit, Friedenberg has spoken out on behalf of a wide range of talents: "The gifted—intellectually, financially, spiritually, erotically; it does not matter—learn to expect no respect for their gifts; indeed to conceal them, except when they can be put to the service of the school's narrowly defined goals."¹⁵ He has also expressed a certain sympathy for such institutions of class privilege as the private school: "At best, they helped the adolescent to make himself into a strongly characterized human being; at worst, their impact made adolescence interminable and their victims permanently fixated 'oldboys.'"¹⁶ Friedenberg, to some degree, must seem to persist in the chatter of the gentleman's club which has, in fact, sponsored a good deal of the inequity, even if he turns against much that it would hold dear. He has also taken up the

wronging of the rich, the financially "gifted," as he puts it, at the hands of the educator: "To paraphrase Oscar Wilde in *The Importance of Being Ernest*, it is evident that many schoolteachers find it is more than their duty to discredit the pretensions of the rich, it is their pleasure."¹⁷ But then, too, in taking up on occasion the case of the wronged wealthy, he has remained sensitive to those qualities that link the most distant of classes: "The rich and the poor, in short, can sometimes tolerate and even enjoy direct access to and expression of their feelings and senses in a way that the middle class consider disorderly."¹⁸ His concern is to seek out the fate of that which he admires and finds unduly threatened by the school as it remains an instrument of an anxious middle class. These special qualities which we sometimes assume only the rich can afford, may not be as omnipresent in adolescence as Friedenberg suggests, although they might be fairly said to pervade the voice which emerges through his work:

Adolescents often behave like members of an old-fashioned aristocracy Their virtues are courage and loyalty; while the necessity for even a moderate degree of compromise humiliates them greatly. They tend to be pugnacious and quarrelsome about what they believe to be their rights, but naive and reckless in defending them. They are shy, but not modest. If they become very anxious they are likely to behave eccentrically, to withdraw, or to attack with some brutality; they are less likely to blend themselves innocuously into an environment with an apologetic smile. They are honest on occasions when even a stupid adult would have better sense.¹⁹

He is hardly the first to discover in those he would write about what he would cultivate in himself; but note as well that in this passage he is, perhaps, as tough on himself as he is on the adolescents. This does not mean that he is necessarily misled in seeking out the ill-fated fortunes of these qualities among high school students, nor is he beyond revising his conception of their virtues in the face of fresh evidence. A few years later in *Coming of Age in America*, another study on the attitudes of high school students, he came to the conclusion that "fidelity and personal devotion are not what they value." These unsettling discoveries on his part were at least balanced on occasion by new-found virtues: "their wretched taste in poetry was grounded in a refined and reliable poetic sensitivity."²⁰

Over the course of his writing, Friedenberg has also altered his conception of the relationship between the individual and the state; the shift is most clearly found in his view of what constitutes adolescence. Initially, in *The Vanishing Adolescent*, it is described as having its own marked psychological function of forming a "clear and stable self-identification." Similarly, in *Coming of Age in America*, he refers to

adolescence as a "stage and a process of growth": "As such it should proceed by doing what comes naturally" which remains a realization of identity which in its later stages partakes of "dignity, self-confidence and unquestioned assumption that the individual is significant in himself."²¹ However, the human qualities which he described as at stake in schooling eventually develop in his work into less clinical matters than such things as "a stable self-identification." Rather than threatening what he had described earlier as "real adolescence," he later suggests that more than a developmental stage is at risk. The schools were taking issue with certain behaviors and attitudes which he considers the right of people whatever their age, behaviors and attitudes such as the urge among students and professors to ask awkward questions or to affect autonomous stances, to take up honestly aggressive stances or divergent styles of thinking and expression.

In this development he would seem to have grown less certain about what he at first presumed about the fixed nature of adolescence. After twenty years of considering this suspended state between childhood's end and maturity, he arrived at the conclusion that "adolescence is a political condition, not a biological one or psychological one; though, like all political conditions it has psychological concomitants; and like others it has biological roots."²² It was as if Friedenberg had realized that the organizational perpetrators of schools are the master carpenters of steps, stages and (political) states, while the elusive autonomy of the individual, to which Friedenberg is persistently drawn, is given to slip-sliding through such dangerous conceptual construction sites as the school, though rarely without a mark or two to show for it. If education is engaged in political work, then these persistently trivial matters in the high school of late slips and locked washrooms, which Friedenberg has never let pass unnoticed, describe the nickel and dime assault on the students' integrity as individuals. In playing down the importance of the school's contribution to the psychological formation of the student, he has to some degree picked up the common notion among students that school is little more than small change.

Another important instance of this eventual shift in Friedenberg's work is found in his choice of heuristic concepts for getting at the conflict underlying sites like the school. In *The Vanishing Adolescent* one of the most interesting and daring points of discussion occurs in the chapter, "Adult Imagery and Feeling," in which he describes the role of homoeroticism in the adult's ill-regard for youth, a highly androcentric discussion which ranges widely over art, Prussian politics and the *Iliad*, only to arrive at a description of the terror suffered by middle-class adults faced with a "subjective intensity, disciplined but non-repressed, [which] lies at the heart of integrity, of artistic creati-

vity, and of adolescence."²³ This meeting of integrity, intensity and art has always been one of the essential touchstones in Friedenbergs argument, especially when it is focused on their embattled state in the romance and promise of the young.

However, with the ensuing politicalization of the school site in the 1960s and 1970s, Friedenbergs began to employ the concept of "hegemony" as the most effective mean of explaining the loss of self-realization in the schools. Hegemony also has its place in discussions of Prussian politics, but he uses it in the manner of Antonio Gramsci to describe "the entire set of assumptions, conventions, values and categories of thought and feelings that are validated by a society and serve to legitimate and protect its dominant institutions and elites from being examined critically on terms other than their own."²⁴ We have with this shift left the individual bodies and minds of the young behind for a political machination which processes the masses even as it channels their thoughts and feelings. In confronting the intransigence of the schools over two hectic decades, Friedenbergs has decided that the only thing left is to strip back the curtain, to unmask the educational struggle and expose the successful political campaign for the hearts and minds of the young. But notice, too, that with politics of hegemony, he continues to cleverly dig with the metaphor:

We do all possess a degree of free will and autonomy and, like Archimedes, could move the earth if we had a place to stand, though this is not why his principle is taught in high school. But against the full weight of hegemony, major alternatives are unlikely to present themselves as possibilities. Rebellion, itself is channeled and molded by hegemony.²⁵

This hardening of the issue around a fundamental political principle of liberty, as something that ranges far beyond the schoolyard, may have occurred for Friedenbergs as part of an earlier and troubling realization which he made about the young. In a revealing piece of intellectual autobiography which forms the preface to his collection of early essays, *The Dignity of Youth and Other Atavisms*, he acknowledges that he may have been seeking what appears to be an impossible combination of personal qualities in youth. Rather surprisingly, he gives the credit for this realization about human nature to the communication theories of Marshall McLuhan:

But it took McLuhan in *Understanding Media* to finally get it through to me that the kind of person whose existence gave meaning to mine was already a product of a considerable degree of alienation simply because he was aware of his strength and pride and of his origins in a way that only people who stand aside from their experience and examine it in the light of various symbols can be.²⁶

In courageously describing his own indignation at having devoted his "life to demanding that the young develop qualities that perhaps just don't go together," he employs the two characters who are friends in John Knowles's novel, *A Separate Peace*, to illustrate both what he admired and where he might have gone wrong. While he supposed that in his work he had been supporting someone very much like Phineas, as the "narcissistic and shallow but emotionally labile and responsive" character, he came to realize that Finny's opposite, "Gene, who never makes a false move or wastes an ounce of energy, is really who I have been harboring all the time, that *he* is really the self-aware one, the boy who could define himself and who tells his own story knowing it to be the story of Cain."²⁷ He had gained a glimpse of a critical distance, a productive alienation, which facilitated rather than disturbed the possibility of an authentic response in students, even as it left it unrealized: "the very source of their nobility is also, it seems, the instrument of their estrangement which saps their vitality."²⁸ Friedenberg was suddenly far more on his own in this endeavour. It put that much more stress on the alienated nature, the self-conscious integrity, of the intellectual who labors to find the metaphor and morality to stir that depleted vitality.

He goes on in this extended preface to reflect on how this conflict troubled him in his initial response to the Free Speech Movement; it was the preliminary to a decade of troubles which tested the mettle of a generation of students, teachers, and scholars. The piece represents a careful effort in accurately representing where these ideas lead and push in their human embodiment. Having found that what he was defending was more elusive than he had first realized, more given to being entangled in the fancy of psychological constructions of character, he seems to have looked away from the struggle of the adolescent in the school in order to draw a new line of defence. He recognized that he would have to rally around something more obviously fundamental to preserving the autonomy of the individual, one that had legal precedence and constitutional authority—the matter of civil liberties in an uncivil state. This matter of the individual's relation to the state, to a singular ideal at the heart of the intellectual state of the country, was increasingly to pervade the work that followed this collection of essays.

This critical and public self-examination is a necessary step in the pursuit of intellectual integrity. It goes on markedly in the preface cited above, but as well at other points in his work. It bears a remarkable resemblance to the current academic enterprise of feminist scholarship, which seems worth noting. Sandra Gilbert, for example, has recently described its thrust in terms of the way in which "each partici-

pant inevitably begins her intellectual work with a careful study of the house of fiction(s) in which she has perhaps unwittingly dwelt all her life."²⁹ Remarkable, too, in its irony, is Friedenbergs work has repeatedly suffered what he himself has referred to as a sexual astigmatism, though he used the term in reference to Paul Willis's work rather than his own.³⁰ It represents a failure of vision on both their parts which has unwittingly made its own contribution to the marginalization of women in the study of education. But to criticize this lapse serves to illustrate the breadth of the responsibility that he would seem to have taken on in bridging the intellectual concerns of the scholar and the social critic.

The responsibility of the intellectual as essayist, which I am suggesting sets this manner of writer apart from the academic, entails observing all the world as well as closely monitoring one's own complex responses as a check on the commonplace. In this way, Friedenbergs work has made much of the politics of the person as he has repeatedly explored the troubled play of liberties within a web of rites. His forthrightness amounts to a tough blend of art and politics; it serves to remind us of what is so often indelicately masked in the name of objective research. The best of that research does not lack conviction, just a subtle means of conveying the manner in which convictions are carried through the work. In reading about education and other social acts, we are too rarely treated to the force of a voice which stands up and apart, which takes its instances from art, scholarship and the worst of the daily news, a voice which is in this case "sensitive and plucky, humorous and warm," to turn Friedenbergs characterization of Phineas from *A Separate Place* on the man himself. But that voice, as Friedenbergs work has demonstrated, is necessarily underwritten by a searching self-awareness and an unforgiving, acerbic wit. Without that, Edgar Z. Friedenbergs work could not so fearlessly tell his own story through the images of our times, though Cain has warned time and again that such troubling tales might not always be well received.

NOTES

1. E.Z. Friedenbergs work, *The Disposal of Liberty and Other Industrial Wastes* (New York: Random House, 1975), xiv.
2. E.Z. Friedenbergs work, *Coming of Age in America: Growth and Acquiescence* (New York: Random House, 1963), 239.
3. E.Z. Friedenbergs work, "Children as Objects of Fear and Loathing," *Educational Studies* 10 (1979): 113.
4. *Coming of Age*, 218.

5. Carl Nordstrom, Edgar Z. Friedenberg and Hillary Gold, *Society's Children: A Study of Ressentiment in the Secondary School* (New York: Random House, 1967).
6. E.Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon, 1959), 169.
7. E.Z. Friedenberg, "Law, Liberty, and Community Standards," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 18 (1984): 210.
8. *Coming of Age*, 249.
9. "Children as Objects," 73.
10. *Coming of Age*, 221.
11. E.Z. Friedenberg, *The Dignity of Youth and Other Atavisms* (Boston: Beacon, 1965), 54.
12. "Children as Objects," 71.
13. E.Z. Friedenberg, "Threading Through an Intellectual Maze," *The Review of Education* 8 (1982): 250.
14. *Coming of Age*, 248.
15. E.Z. Friedenberg, "The Function of the School in Social Homeostasis," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 7 (1970): 14.
16. *The Vanishing Adolescent*, 23.
17. *Coming of Age*, 199.
18. *Coming of Age*, 213.
19. *The Vanishing Adolescent*, 340.
20. *Coming of Age*, 120, 116.
21. *Coming of Age*, 4.
22. E.Z. Friedenberg, "The Limits of Growth: Adolescence in Canada," *McGill Journal of Education* 15 (1980): 132.
23. *The Vanishing Adolescent*, 191.
24. E.Z. Friedenberg, "Hegemony and the Process of Schooling: A Second Look at the Hidden Curriculum," *Teacher Education* 17 (1982): 28.
25. E.Z. Friedenberg, "Deference to Authority: Education in Canada and the United States," in *Poverty, Power and Authority: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. E. Gumbert (Atlanta: Georgia State U. P., 1981), 62.
26. *The Dignity of Youth*, 5.
27. *The Dignity of Youth*, 6, original emphasis.
28. *The Dignity of Youth*, 5.
29. G. Graff, "Feminist Criticism in the University: An Interview With Sandra Gilbert," in *Criticism in the University*, ed. G. Graff and R. Gibbons (Evanston, IL: Northwestern U. P., 1985), 112.
30. "Threading Through an Intellectual Maze," 250.