lic. All that can possibly come out of the present American policy toward the Dominican Republic, that American policy which I believe American Conservatives could yet call a halt to were they to act *soon,* must be to level the Dominican Republic as Castroism has leveled Cuba, as the USSR has leveled Russia and the Iron Curtain countries, as Mao Tse-tung has leveled China—to destroy those meaningful distinctions of rank, of privilege, of wealth, of prestige and position that any decent society develops and builds into itself as it grows toward achievement of the purposes that called it into being as a society—to snuff out of existence one further component of that West, that Christendom, that Communism and Liberalism set out to obliterate more than a century ago. We of the American Right —stupidly, irresponsibly—permitted it to happen in Cuba; we must not permit it to happen again in the Dominican Republic. All of our principles—the three basic principles I have tried to lay on the line tonight—require us to rescue the Dominican Republic from our own Department of State.

(Fall, 1961.)

Basic Issues Between Conservatives and Liberals

The topic of this article: those two groups of politically-conscious people out in American society, the "Liberals" and the "Conservatives," and the whole question of what the disagreement between them is about. Should I tarry to argue with the man, ex-President Eisenhower for instance, who insists that no such groups actually exist—as witness the impossibility of drawing a meaningful line between them? I think not: the groups seem to have little difficulty identifying themselves, and can, paraphrasing Descartes' enthymeme, say "Nous nous identifions, donc nous sommes"; and as for the contention that no-one can say what they disagree about, let us dismiss it as question-begging.

My thesis is, then, that we know what we mean when we make to one another such statements as the following: The Liberals support Medicare; the Conservatives oppose it. The Liberals would like to broaden and deepen our social security system until it is finally applicable from womb to tomb; the Conservatives think we'd have been better off if we had never gone in for that sort of thing to begin with. The Liberals take seriously the so-called disarmament negotiations with the Soviets, and take them seriously because they favor disarmament—would, if the Russians too would only be serious about disarmament, actually *disarm* the U.S.; the Conservatives regard the disarmament negotiations as essentially fraudulent, and would not think of disarming even if the Russians were willing. The Liberals dream dreams of out-lawing war, of establishing an international authority empowered to prevent war, of an indefinite future in which the nations will live side by side in peace and unity; the Conservatives dream no such dreams; they regard even the existing United Nations organization with suspicion, would not hesitate to challenge its authority if ever it tried to call the United States on the carpet, and take it for granted that wars have quite a future on this planet just as they have had quite a past—in short, Conservatives dislike the orientation of American foreign policy toward pacifism and world govern-

ment. The Liberals have nightmares about the future nuclear holocaust and, meantime, about nuclear fallout, and, naturally enough, favor such measures as the nuclear test-ban treaty; the Conservatives are given to no such nightmares: they face the nuclear age with, so to speak, strong stomachs, dislike the test-ban treaty, and demand that the United States maintain overwhelming nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union. The Liberals look with favor on any and all proposals for equalizing the *soi-disant* "civil rights" of Americans, insist that the federal government not the state governments assume responsibility for equalizing civil rights, and demand that the federal government bring to the enforcement of civil rights measures the full weight of the federal government's power and authority (right up to and including the military occupation of the South); the Conservatives drag their feet on equalizing civil rights to start with, certainly do not want the federal government forever in the business of equalizing civil rights, and view with horror such spectacles as those federal troops in Little Rock and Oxford. The Liberals support ever-expanding federal aid to and control of the public schools; the Conservatives would, like the Constitution, leave responsibility for education to the states and the local communities. The Liberals are pleased when, for example, the learned Dr. Oppenheimer gets a new lease on respectability by receiving—from the hands of the President himself—the Fermi Award, and rub their hands when they hear, as we do now and then, that a still unrepentant Alger Hiss is prospering, and applaud when, as happens oftener than now and then, the United States Supreme Court wipes out still another part of the internal security system bequeathed to us by the late Senator McCarthy, or appears to be drawing a bead on the House Un-American Activities Committee; the Conservatives, by contrast, are appalled at the rehabilitation of Dr. Oppenheimer and the well-wishing for Mr. Hiss: they would like to strengthen not weaken our internal security arrangements, and if one must go, HUAC or the Jefferson Memorial, the Conservatives will opt for saving the Committee. (Only an extreme Conservative, like myself, would say that there never should have been a monument to Jefferson to begin with.) We do, I say, know what we mean when we make such statements about the "Liberals" and the "Conservatives.

Now: for purposes of this article, let us call issues like those we have just been noticing "policy" issues between Liberals and Conservatives. "Policy" issues, let us say, are the issues that are *out in the open* in American politics, issues that actually and visibly *divide* Liberals and Conservatives in the day-to-day struggles over legislation, over what foreign-policy measures to adopt in the Cold War, over current Supreme Court decisions as, Monday after Monday, the justices let us all in on what the Constitution means *this* week. "Policy" issues, let us go further and say, are the issues over which, normally, people seem to be choosing sides in our politics, the issues with an eye to which most people appear to *become* Liberals or Conservatives, that is, make up their minds as to which of our two groups, *the* Liberals and *the* Conservatives, they are going to join, and, what is perhaps most important, choose their *heroes* in politics (which will you have, Bobby Kennedy or Ronald Reagan?). But, having said all that, we must now add: these policy issues are not our real problem in this article; they are precisely *not* the "basic" issues between Liberals and Conservatives; nor shall we, I think, ever understand why we have on our hands those two groups of people, the Liberals and the Conservatives, unless we drive our analysis down to a level deeper than that of the policy issues, that is, to the level of those fundamental (or, to anticipate a little, *irreducible*) political beliefs and attitudes that cause men *to* differ, *to* take different sides, on the policy issues. John F. Kennedy and Adlai Stevenson, for example, favored the test-ban treaty, yes, and Barry Goldwater, for example, opposed it, but not, I contend, because John F. Kennedy liked treaties and Barry Goldwater didn't, or because Barry Goldwater wanted the skies full of nuclear fall-out and John F. Kennedy didn't. Down deep within John F. Kennedy and Barry Goldwater, I contend, there were—*must* have been—some basic beliefs and attitudes that made their respective stands on this policy issue not only intelligible but also *predictable.* Beneath the policy issues, I contend, there are, *must* be, some deeper issues on which Conservatives and Liberals take different stands and, having taken them, *have* to disagree about the policy issues. The stands men take on the policy issues, I contend, are *derivative* from the stands they take on the *basic* issues. And the task I have set myself in this article is that of identifying at least some of the major basic issues that, as I see it, underlie our differences about what concrete *policies* we are to adopt in our day-to-day conduct of government.

That task cannot, for several reasons, be an easy one. Conservative-

Liberal differences over the policy issues are (as I have indicated) visible, audible, "out-in-the-open"; not so, by ordinary, Conservative-Liberal differences about the basic issues. The latter, in our present intellectual climate, do not, for the most part, come to the surface at all—so that I owe it to my readers, to admit, *ab initio,* that the burden of proof, not only as to the role the basic issues play but as to their very existence as issues, is on me. Put otherwise, I owe an answer to any objector who may say: if the issues you speak of are all so basic as all that, we might fairly expect them to be constant topics of discussion and debate in our public forum—which, you yourself tell us they are not; and we want to know, first off, how that can be? How, he may continue, can your issues be basic in the sense intended and yet, as you have intimated, somehow hidden.

Now: that is a matter, quite simply, of what I called a moment ago the "intellectual climate" in which we live, and have lived so long already that it is difficult for most of us to imagine any other intellectual climate. It is, however, a very peculiar intellectual climate—at least when viewed from the standpoint of those, like myself for example, who do not feel altogether at home in it, and peculiar above all in its way of handling, and appearing to dispose of, my basic issues. It is, to begin with, an intellectual climate now wholly dominated by Liberals—that is, by authoritative voices whose owners are committed to the Liberal side on both my policy issues and my basic issues. It is, secondly, an intellectual climate that tends to discourage discussion and debate about my basic issues—not, I hasten to add, by suppressing them, by never bringing them up, which would be one way to discourage such discussion and debate, but rather by treating them as issues that have already been decided, as issues that are no longer "up", that is, as issues that may have been "up" at some moment in the past but have ceased to be "up" because they are issues about which, nowadays, reasonable men could not possibly disagree. The situation is not, then, that my basic issues are never mentioned or referred to, rather the contrary: public discussion is full of references to them, but precisely not as issues that require further discussion, precisely not as proper topics for continuing debate. It is an intellectual climate whose chief characteristic, then, is an elaborate pretense that we are—all of us—in fundamental agreement on the basic issues; and that the Liberal position on the basic issues is not only right, but so patently and indisputably right that there is

nothing further to be said about it. The Conservative position on the issues in question, in other words, may fairly be called the *silent* position. *Qua* silent, it has to be ferreted out, Nay, more: Its very existence has to be inferred, that is *deduced,* from the following fact: Despite that elaborate pretense that we all agree on the basic issues, Liberal proposals deriving from the Liberal position on the basic issues run up, politically speaking, against constant and on the whole successful resistance, and that resistance, I contend, entitles us to affirm the existence of a Conservative position that, however silent, is nevertheless *there.* And that position is silent, I contend, because in our intellectual climate it is outflanked—because, I repeat, most of the articulate people on the horizon are Liberals, and Liberals who take it for granted that a Conservative position on the basic issues is impossible to defend, either intellectually or morally. And No, I must not be understood to be suggesting (as we Conservatives are so often accused of suggesting) that there is anything conspiratorial or inherently sinister about the intellectual climate as I have just described it. I only wish, indeed, that the matter were that simple, since were that the case all that would be needed to reopen discussion of the basic issues would be to expose the conspiracy. Those authoritative voices, I should say rather, are those of men deeply and sincerely convinced that the basic issues have indeed been disposed of once and for all: the Conservative position has to be ignored, has to be treated as non-existent, because to treat it otherwise would, for them, itself be intellectually dishonest, itself be a conspiracy against the public good. What I am pointing to is not a conspiracy but a fact, which it is mine not to complain about but to try to understand and square off to, namely: the virtually complete domination of our intellectual climate by the Liberal position on my basic issues. Which, I repeat, is why the Conservative position on those issues has to be first fished up and then hauled out into the light of day. My task, as I began by saying, cannot be an easy one.

II

Perhaps it would help if, at this point, I paused to do two things: First, to point to some issues that I am *not* going to put forward as "basic" between Conservatives and Liberals, though I know that some of my readers may well be expecting me to put them forward.

For instance: we hear, sometimes, that the essence of Conservatism is to be found in its *religious* basis—with the implication that Conservatives and Liberals are somehow divided over such questions as the existence of God, or the status amongst us of Judaeo-Christian religious beliefs in general, or our subordination to divine will, or what have you in and around the whole business of politics and religion. That I take to be nonsense, since many practicing Christians are Liberals, and many convinced Conservatives unbelievers. For instance again: We are often told that the essence of Conservatism is to be found in its dedication to free enterprise, or capitalism, or private property—with the implication that all the Liberals are Socialists, and mean business about Socialism; where my answer is that there is nothing as dead amongst us today as Socialism, and that the one thing we owe to Communist effort is that private property has been made safe for our time. Still again for instance: There are those who would like us to believe that the essence of Conservatism is its distrust of political power, its dedication to limited government, its opposition to centralized authority, and that the Liberals are totally indifferent to the dangers of centralized authority and big government—to which I answer that alike Liberals and Conservatives want centralized authority for some purposes but not for others, that therefore the issue, as just stated, is for the most part spurious (how much centralized authority would it take, for instance, to bring the Soviet Union to heel, as Conservatives would like to do?). I shall not be speaking, then, of religion or capitalism or decentralized authority as basic issues in the sense I intend: I doubt whether they in fact divide Conservatives and Liberals in the neat way that some people claim.

What then are the issues I have in mind? Let us, instead of listing them, keep things simple by taking them up one at a time—speaking, to begin with, of the basic difference I believe to exist between Conservatives and Liberals over the nature and extent of our dedication, here in America, to the political goal of *Equality.* For I believe that the aforementioned policy differences between Liberals and Conservatives derive to a very large extent from their difference about—as I like to put it—the meaning we are going to impose upon those words in the Declaration of Independence: All men are created equal.

My point here is *not,* I hasten to add, that there is an issue between Conservatives and Liberals as to the *status* of the all-men-are-created

clause: Conservatives no less than Liberals, I think, accept the Declaration of Independence as an initial but authoritative statement of our political creed, think of it as laying down doctrines to which We the People stand wholly committed, and recognize an obligation on our part to *act* in our political life consistently with those commitments—of which the all-men-are-created-equal clause is certainly one. But there, I think, the agreement stops, because Conservatives do not accept, do not regard as a commitment of theirs, the principle of politics into which the Liberals have sought to translate the all-men-are-created-equal clause, namely: It is our duty to assure to all of our citizens genuine *equality of opportunity,* to remove from our national life, and that at the earliest possible moment, all identifiable barriers to equality of opportunity, to leave nothing undone that could contribute to equality of opportunity; and not merely our duty to do these things, but also to place that duty at the very top, so to speak, of our roster of duties; not merely our duty to do these things, but our duty in a very special sense—our duty in the sense that when we leave these things undone we should be deeply troubled in our consciences, should plead ourselves guilty of having failed to do that which we should have done before anything else, and should move speedily, or at least not stand in the way of others as they move speedily, to undo the wrong that has been done to those who have been denied equal opportunity (or, if it is too late for that, at least see to it that the wrong shall not in the future be inflicted upon others). My readers will, I think, recognize that series of propositions as familiar counters in our current political discussion—nay, as *potent* counters, in the sense that any measure called for by one or another of the propositions ceases, once that is made clear, to be deemed a proper topic for futher argument, which is to say: Show that a given measure *is* called for by one of the propositions I have named, and —in our intellectual climate—no further justification of the measure is deemed necessary; those who oppose the measure must do so not on the grounds that it is unjustified in principle, but on some other grounds—for example, that we can't afford it for the moment, or that it is unconstitutional, or that there is a simpler or cheaper or more promising way to accomplish the purpose in hand. The equality-of-opportunity doctrine, I am saying then, rides high in contemporary America. It has been promoted to the status of an axiom; if it is anywhere being challenged on its merits, we do not hear about it; and

if it were openly challenged on its merits, I think it a safe bet that the man who challenged it would soon find himself publicly discredited—as reactionary, or heartless, or selfish, or unavailable to the clear call of duty, depending on which of these sticks were handiest for beating him over the head.

So much, I think, is indisputable: the Liberals, judging from what we hear out in the public forum, have won any argument that they may once have had with the Conservatives over equalization of opportunity as a basic, settled commitment of We the People of the United States. How, then, can I claim, as I am about to do, that equalization of opportunity is, nevertheless, a basic issue between Conservatives and Liberals? Well, let me say first that the apparently universal acceptance of the equalization doctrine leaves a good deal to be explained: Any way you look at it, progress on the equalization-of-opportunity front, if there be progress at all (which I doubt), is glacially slow. New-born babes in the United States are *not* born to the equality of opportunity that Liberals claim for them as, literally, their birthright, but what is more, nobody thinks they are. More important still: even measures that might move things just a little towards making good the supposed right to equal opportunity are stoutly—and on the whole successfully—resisted all along the front. Most important of all: really drastic measures on behalf of equality of opportunity are not even proposed—not, I imagine, because the Liberals can't think up such measures, and not, I imagine, because they wouldn't be in favor of such measures, but because sound strategic instinct tells them that such measures are not politically possible. Why? Because vast numbers of Americans simply do not accept the supposed moral obligation to equalize opportunity as binding upon *them,* as a duty of theirs; and they do not accept it, I suggest, because they do not believe, down deep in their hearts, that any such duty exists. No other explanation of the slow progress toward equalization of opportunity will, I believe, hold water. Despite their elaborate pretense to the contrary, the proponents of equal opportunity have not—not yet anyhow—pled their case successfully at the bar of public opinion. You can, to be sure, silence argument with the equalization doctrine as I have stated it: but you cannot get people to support the measures the doctrine calls for. There is, then, for all that we never hear of it, a Conservative position on equality of opportunity, and it stands in flat and unyielding opposition to the Liberal position.

Equality of opportunity, far from being a matter of settled doctrine amongst us, is a basic issue between the Liberals among us and the Conservatives among us, and in order to begin to understand contemporary American politics we had best begin to recognize it as just that. For I am sure, I repeat, that a very high percentage of Conservative-Liberal differences over policy issues are derivative from this basic difference over equality of opportunity.

"But all you are proving," some reader may object, "is that Conservatives are political *sinners,* not that they deny the moral obligation to support equalization measures." "The sinner," that reader may proceed, "is seldom a man who tells himself in his heart that he is acting virtuously. He sins because he is weak, or because he is lazy, or because he is selfish, and cannot or doesn't want to make the sacrifice that his duty demands of him; the sinner is usually a man who knows better than anyone else the sinfulness of his behavior." "And," my objector may conclude, "I believe that to be the case with your Conservative who opposes equalization measures. He cannot make out an intellectual or moral case for what you call his position, and he knows that he can't. Properly speaking, therefore, he hasn't *got* a position; he is silent because he doesn't have a leg to stand on." Now: that is a persuasive objection, and before passing on to my second basic issue I owe it to the reader to indicate, briefly, at least, the grounds upon which, in a less hostile intellectual climate, Conservatives *would* defend their opposition to equality of opportunity as a goal for American society. (I shall attempt to do that with each of my basic issues—drawing for this purpose on what Conservatives say to one another when they talk together; for Conservatives do talk when they are beyond the reach of Mr. Walter Cronkite and those microphones.) The equality of opportunity goal, they would say, is unrealistic, impossible to achieve, *utopian*—and because utopian, *dangerous.* In order to equalize opportunity in any meaningful way you would have, first of all—as clear-headed political philosophers have always seen—to neutralize that great carrier and perpetuator of unequal opportunity, the *family,* and you can do that, really do it, only by abolishing the family, which we will not let you do because that would be wrong. You would have, in the second place, to abolish poverty, and we do not believe anybody knows how to do that—the pie, if I may put it so, just isn't big enough to go 'round; and the schemes one hears of now and then for making it big enough to go

around do not commend themselves to us, either intellectually or morally; usually they involve one kind or another of *socialism,* about which we believe *both* that it is morally wrong and that it won't work —that it will in fact impoverish people rather than improve their lot. In a word, you can't equalize opportunity, and it is wrong to talk as if you could—wrong, to go further, because you encourage many people to think themselves entitled to things they cannot have, to think they are being treated unjustly when in fact all is being done for them that can be done—more, indeed, in many cases, than ought to be done because more than is good for them. All that creates unnecessary and unwarranted resentment, and causes dissension among us, kicks up trouble. Finally, we repudiate your equality of opportunity goal because it rests on a false reading of the all-men-are-created-equal clause, and makes us forget, keeps us from acting on, the true meaning of those words, which commits us *not* to equalizing opportunity as the Liberals understand it but rather, to use a favorite phrase of ours, to providing for every American the kind of equality to which Abe Lincoln was born—to the kind of equality that, we think rightly and wisely, he sought to extend to the whole of our population rather than only some of it. That kind of equality means leaving people free to equalize their own opportunities, as Lincoln certainly equalized his—to equalize their own opportunities to the extent that they have the ability, the energy, and the determination to do it. Such equality is a matter not of doing things *for* people, but of leaving them alone—of seeing to it that even the highest places in our society are there for anyone, everyone, to win if he has the wit and strength to win them, and of seeing to it, beyond that, that everyone is given maximum encouragement to develop, out of himself, that necessary amount of wit and strength. We believe that by equalizing opportunity *for* people, by releasing them from the responsibility to equalize their own opportunities, you will penalize the best of them, the Abraham Lincolns, in a futile attempt to do something for those who will be only too willing to settle for what you do *for* them, and let it go at that. You want to turn the American dream of a career really open to the able into an American nightmare of mediocrity, and we will not let you do it. But enough—it is no part of my task in this article to prove that the Conservatives are right on the "basic issues"; I seek only to persuade the reader that there is a Conservative position on each of them, and that it deserves a hearing.

I seek only to persuade him that the basic issues I speak of are by no means already decided—that, rather, there is with respect to each of them room for a great and continuing public debate; and, for the moment, that that is certainly the case with Equality.

My second basic issue calls upon us for a quick shift of gears; it is of a quite different character from my first, and may seem to some of my readers not to be a political issue at all. Let me, for that reason —without putting a name to it quite yet—work my way into it by posing, "socratically", the following series of questions: Surely I am right—am I not—in saying that those Liberal spokesmen who dominate our intellectual climate are constantly telling us, in one way or another, that the moral imperatives of our age are in the very nature of the case "different" from those of past ages? Surely I am right—am I not—in saying that one of the axioms of contemporary Liberal political discourse is, quite simply, that morally speaking we have outgrown our grandparents, transcended our grandparents, risen above our grandparents? Surely I am right—am I not—in saying that our Liberal spokesmen are forever telling us "We must do this, and that, and that yonder, because *the time is past* when—how naturally the words fall on our ears—without turning back the hands of the clock, without repudiating the moral demands of the Twentieth Century, without refusing to live up to the responsiblities—the special and unprecedented responsibilities—of our time, we can say 'No' "? Surely I am right—am I not—in saying that we are constantly told that we must, for example, "abolish war", with the clear implication that our grandfathers failed to abolish war because morally speaking they just weren't up on our exalted level, because though free to choose between the higher level of morality and the lower, they chose, and settled for, the lower? Surely I am right—am I not—in saying that we are forever being told that we must, for example, liquidate the last vestiges of Colonialism, or must recognize our obligation to minister to the "expectations" of the underdeveloped peoples, or what have you, because there is a new morality abroad in the world, better by far than the morality of our grandfathers, a new morality to which we must subordinate ourselves, lest someone accuse us of not knowing what century we live in; must subordinate ourselves to it, *cost what it may, wherever the chips fall, Come Hell and High Water?* Surely I am right—am I not—in saying that discussion of these matters normally proceeds on the premise, none the less

oppressive because often tacit, that there is only one decent attitude to adopt toward those grandfathers of ours, namely, to bow our heads and be ashamed of them, to repudiate them as teachers of morality, especially political morality, and—well, get on with the job of building that better world that they were too obtuse, morally, to envisage? Surely I am right—am I not—in saying that the tacit premise, not the less placed beyond challenge because tacit, is that we, we sons of the Twentieth Century, are historically speaking a very superior breed, projected upon a place of moral excellence the like of which mankind has never seen before? Surely I am right—am I not—in saying that one of the rules of the New Morality is: "Thou shalt not speak up in defense of our grandfathers—they were a poor and benighted lot, and there's an end to it"?

Let us, without pausing to argue whether the correct answer to all those questions is "Yes", call all that line of chatter the "Appeal-to-the-Century stopper"—"Appeal-to-the-Century" because the "century", *this* century, is the supreme tribunal to which appeal is being made, and "stopper" because wherever the appeal is made it is understood, by the appellant, as putting an end to the argument. Our age is, to be sure, more lenient than most ages as to whom you can talk back to—it has no objection if you talk back to Authority, or to Revelation, or even, I suppose, to Walter Lippmann. But its strategically-situated spokesmen will not let you talk back to the Century. Here again my point is, quite simply: There is a silent Conservative position that flatly denies the whole line-of-chatter and so gives us what is indeed a second basic issue. Here again my point is: The apparently universal acceptance of the Liberal position, the new morality, leaves altogether too much to be explained, since the generality of men amongst us seem to regard the new morality as an attempt to impose upon them obligations that they find unacceptable. The new morality—the imperatives of the age—leaves them unmoved. The Century commands us to do something about the underdeveloped countries? Our Congressmen probably won't put up much argument about it on the level of so-called principle; they will merely vote down the relevant provisions of the foreign aid bill. We must abolish war? The Congressmen, and their constituents as well, will again refuse the gambit on the level of principle, but will see to it that the Pentagon keeps on getting ready for that next war that the Century forbids us to fight. I could multiply examples of this kind

indefinitely, but I will spare the reader that and pass on to the question, "What goes on in the minds of those Conservatives that makes them refuse, when called upon to do so, to climb aboard the Twentieth Century Limited?" Something like this, I think: The Conservatives believe, with Burke, that the important discoveries in morals and politics were made long before our generations put in their appearance. They believe, again with Burke, that anything that purports to be a new discovery in morals or politics is, for that very reason, suspect. They deny, with Burke again, that there are fashions in morality as in women's wearing apparel; and, like Burke, look upon their grandfathers, even their remote ancestors, with respect and reverence. They insist, following Burke, that the man who has no respect for his ancestors is unlikely to have much respect for himself, and they believe that we shall be well-advised, we sons of the Twentieth Century, to try to live up to our grandfathers before we try to surpass or transcend them—that, indeed, our grandfathers ran a better world than we seem to be running, and that the big reason we run a worse world is that we have failed, failed in the crucial dimensions, to measure up to the moral standards we have inherited from the past. As Robert Penn Warren has put it: "The past is always a *rebuke* to the present; it's bound to be, one way or the other; it's your rebuke. It's a better rebuke than any dream of the future . . . *The drama of the past that corrects us* is the drama of our struggles to be human, or our struggles to define the values of our forbears in the face of their difficulties" (italics added). The Conservatives believe that the new morality usually turns out, upon examination, to be *immorality;* and they feel confident, as they make that judgment, because in making it they speak out of a morality that *boasts* of its rootedness in tradition. They dislike especially the way the rules of the new morality end in phrases like "Cost what it may" or "Come Hell and High Water," because for them such phrases have only one meaning and that a shocking meaning, namely: Let us adjourn considerations of prudence—we are so right, we up-to-date moderns, so absolutely and marvellously right, that we do not have to raise questions about the consequences of applying our rules; if the rule is right, as it must be since it is ours, then the consequences of obeying it must be right. All of that, for the Conservative, is impudent moral nonsense, since he knows that one of our major obligations in politics is to act prudently, as one of our major obligations in morality is to walk in the ways of

humility. But again enough: I believe I have already shown that there is an issue here, and one which, if debated publicly, would not find the Conservatives without intellectual and moral arguments. It remains only to put a name to it; and I suggest that we call it the issue of *piety toward the past*—and that, here again, we should all be better off if it were fished up to the surface of our public debate and talked about, instead of being constantly brushed aside as if it did not exist.

For my third basic issue, we must again shift gears. I am going to call it the issue of the "Open Society", and I think of it as the issue that underlies (and renders unavoidable) Liberal-Conservative differences on, for example, McCarthyism, the House Un-American Activities Committee, the censorship of allegedly indecent or pornographic books and films, loyalty oaths, and many another problem involving, in one way or another, individual freedom of thought and speech. Just as my first issue, Equality, boiled down to an issue as to the meaning we are going to give in America to the words "All men are created equal", that is, to a form of words handed down from the past, so this one boils down to an issue as to the meaning we are going to give in America to the First Amendment of the Constitution. The Liberals see that amendment as a guarantee of certain *individual* rights—the right of each to think and say what one pleases, the right of each to the free exercise of one's religion even if that religion be irreligion, the right of each to live under a governmental system that in no way favors one religion over other religions or even religion-in-general over irreligion. Some Liberals, indeed—Mr. Justice Black for instance—go so far as to say that these rights are *absolute,* so that no governmental agency in America can infringe or limit them in any way by indirection. Other Liberals, avoiding that rather frightening word "absolute", would permit the government to interfere with, *e.g.,* freedom of speech if and when it can be shown that free speech is posing a clear and present danger to public order and the civil peace. (Even these more moderate Liberals, however, are likely to shift in the direction of an absolute right when it is a question of the free exercise of religion, or of government action that appears to favor religion at the expense of irreligion.) At first blush, therefore, the Liberal position here would seem to be less "neat" than the Liberal position on my other two issues, and the Liberal-Conservative clash, accordingly, might fairly be expected to be less sharp than on the other two. But these difficulties disappear, I think, if we insist

on forcing the question down to a deeper level, where the Liberals cease to fall out over questions of detail and unite in opposition to my silent Conservatives (who are, just possibly, a little less silent on this issue than on the other two). And we arrive at that deepest level, I believe, when we state the issue not in terms of individual rights, with their long history in the decisions of the United States Supreme Court, but, I repeat, in terms of the "case for" and the "case against" the Open Society (as it is called in one of the most influential Liberal books of our time). The question then becomes whether (I take my language from Mr. Justice Douglas) we in America have or do not have an "orthodoxy", a "creed" of some kind, that we seek to "prescribe" (again I use Justice Douglas' term) to our "individual" citizens. Nearly all Liberals would agree, I think, that we have no such orthodoxy, and that our governments never have any business acting as if we did. America is to be an *open society,* in which differing opinions compete freely with one another in an "ideas"-market as merchants freely compete with one another in a vegetable-market. Government, public authority, must not seek to give the inside-run to any opinion, any point of view—whether by suppressing one opinion at the expense of another, or by seeking to inculcate one opinion at the expense of another. And here, as with my other two issues, the Liberals seem to me to be saying: The discussion—the intellectual and moral discussion—is over; we *should* be, have our minds made up to be, an open society. If there are people in America who hold some different position, let us recognize that that position cannot be supported by sense-making intellectual or moral arguments, since any different position is, on the face of it, rooted ultimately in prejudice and bigotry.

Is there, in point of fact, no issue about the Open Society? The answer, once more, is that the universal agreement to which our Liberal spokesmen appeal leaves too much to be explained: the continuance on our statute-books of rules requiring loyalty oaths; the religious observances in public ceremonies and in the public schools (now, to be sure, in open defiance of the Supreme Court); the chapels at our service schools; the chaplains in the Armed Forces and in Congress; the exemptions of church property from taxation; the "In God We Trust" on the nation's coinage; the exclusion of Communists and Communist sympathizers from government employment—indeed a thousand disabilities under which we place the Communist

movement in all its forms and manifestations. There is, in other words, a whole list of things that, as the Liberals always find when they try to get rid of them, enjoy widespread support that can only be described as Conservative. And it remains only to ask, once more, and to answer briefly, the question: Are not the Liberals right when they say the discussion is over, that the Conservative support I speak of is rooted exclusively in prejudice and bigotry, and that there is no Conservative position here that can be defended with intellectual and moral argument?

Once more my answer must be "No"; the discussion, properly speaking, is not over; the Conservatives are for the most part silent because up on the level of public discussion they are momentarily outflanked, not because they have nothing to say that is worth listening to. Were the discussion reopened—as I am pleading in this article that all three discussions ought to be reopened—the Conservatives could, for example, claim the support of most of the great-name political philosophers who, through the centuries, have addressed themselves to questions relating to the public orthodoxy. They could argue that the doctrine of the Open Society is, in point of fact, an upstart among political doctrines, since it is as old as, and no older than, John Stuart Mill's *Essay on Liberty*. They could insist that there are great intellectual difficulties in Mill's position, that Mill's critics have repeatedly exposed those difficulties, and that none of Mill's epigones has stepped forward to do honest battle with those critics. The Conservatives could argue, again with considerable show of reason, that the Open Society is on the face of it unworkable, because its very idea presupposes a demonstrably false view of human nature since human beings as we know them, and particularly as we see them in America, cannot be prevailed upon to behave as the Open Society expects them to behave (*i.e.*, to tolerate the dissemination of opinions that they deem outrageous). They could demonstrate and back up the demonstration with overwhelming evidence that the open-society conception of America is, on the record to date, unacceptable to vast numbers of Americans, and that this is a fact that the Liberals, however right they may be in theory, ignore at their peril. (Vast numbers of Americans, as I like to put it, have yet to make up their minds whether America is a political society like other political societies, or something rather more like a church.) The Conservatives could argue, as Boston argued in effect with Roger Williams, that they

have yet to hear why the right of a people to adopt an orthodoxy, to seek to hand it down to their descendants, to take steps against those who would undermine it, isn't as good a right as the right of the "individual" to freedom of thought and speech. But again enough: my point is not that the Conservatives would necessarily win the debate if the issue were ever reopened, but merely that it would be quite a debate.

Will the debates for which I am pleading ever actually come off? Not, you may be sure, for so long as the Liberals retain their virtual monopoly of the mike—in the mass communications and, above all, in the college and university classrooms.

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