Organization Man:
Rational or Self-Actualizing?

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Editor's Note:
The following “response” has been written to the article, “Some Limits of Rational Man Organizational Theory,” by Chris Argyris, which appeared in the May/June 1973 issue of PAR. A reply to the “response” by Professor Argyris also follows.

For a number of years, Professor Chris Argyris has advocated a revolution in administrative practices and forms that would transform organizations into fit environments for human “self-actualization.” Argyris' prescriptions for organizations derive from, and are not dissimilar from, the prescriptions of other adherents to the human relations movement—MacGregor's “Theory Y,” for example—but are perhaps the most sweeping of these, and based on the most explicit view of the nature of Man. His position, particularly in his more recent writings, acknowledges its debt to the motivational theories of Abraham Maslow; and in this way aligns itself with a broader stream of contemporary revolutionary counterculture thought that is concerned with remaking all of our social institutions, and not just formal organizations.

In a recent issue of Public Administration Review (May/June 1973), Argyris has presented a critique of what he calls “rational organizational theory”—a regrettable awkward phrase—from the vantage point of his own preoccupation with self-actualization. From Argyris' lengthy critique we can discover just what he supposes the differences to be between these two approaches to organization theory, and how he goes about weighing their respective merits. Argyris conceived his paper as “a plea to the rational-man theorists to consider more seriously the variables found in the behavioral science research focusing on human realization and growth within organizations.” I conceive these comments as a plea to advocates of sweeping social change to provide us with empirical evidence to support the postulates about human nature—and particularly about its mutability and malleability—upon which their advocacy rests.

Argyris on Bounded Rationality

There is no need to pick fault with details of Argyris' characterization of the theories of Allison, Cyert, March, Steinbruner, and myself. The broad lines of the pictures he paints make the subjects recognizable, and we should not demand that the portraits be flattering. I will pause only to correct a couple of the more serious distortions. Any reader curious to know what I really think can go to the pages of Administrative Behavior, Organizations, The Shape of Automation, or The Sciences of the Artificial and discover for himself.

Influence and Authority

First, Argyris' critique contains a serious confusion between the influence of the organizational environment upon the individual, and the influence of the manager upon the individual. A characteristic example of this confusion is the sentence: “The first step the organization takes to create this psychological environment is for the administrators (the people in power) to define the organizational goals.” (The italics are mine.) In this single sentence, first the organization is
personified, then it is replaced—in two steps—by “the people in power.” Within a couple of pages, the organizational environment has been forgotten entirely and “it is management that gives the orders downward.”

Managers, of course, swim about in the organizational environment, are influenced by it, just as are other employees. A major purpose of Barnard’s (and my) reexamination of the theory of authority was to show that in real organizations authority (as well as influence of all other kinds) flows in all directions, and not just downward. An organization is a social system that exists and adapts in a larger social environment. It is a system of interpersonal behavior, which survives when the participants in it are motivated to maintain their patterns of behavior, and which changes or dies when they are not. Argyris does not cite my essay “On the Concept of Organizational Goal” (Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 9 (1964), pp. 1-22), where some of these issues are clarified further—but then, I expect he has had to sample my writings, as I have had to sample his.

Argyris’ thorough misunderstanding of the Barnard-Simon theory of authority is epitomized by the following attribution: “Behavior in organizations, as far as it is rational, is governed by the system of authority in the organization (Simon, 1957, p. 149).” Thus one reason that people accept the organizational goals and the mechanisms of organizational influence is that they accept organizational authority.” The first sentence is a gross misquote of what I said on the page cited—as the reader can verify by reading the page himself. The second sentence is either meaningless or a complete reversal of the true causal arrow. People do not accept the mechanisms of organizational influence because they accept organizational authority. Authority is, by definition, a particular form of acceptance of influence. They accept (not “submit to”) authority, as Argyris himself then goes on to point out, because a variety of motivations are provided for them to do so. The nature of these motivations is the subject of inducements-contributions theory.

This misunderstanding of the theory of authority leads Argyris to some further extravagances. Having drawn a caricature of top-down hierarchical organization, he opines: “It is organizational structures such as these that lead to organizational entropy, ineffective decision-making, especially on the important decision.” Three whole-volume references—to Argyris and Likert—are cited as the “documentation” of this global assertion.

His discussion of organizational influence also contains some unfortunate confusions of “is” with “ought.” A passage on page 103 of Administrative Behavior reads: “The organization trains and indoctrinates its members. This might be called the internalization of influence, because it injects into the very nervous systems of the organization members the criteria of decision that the organization wishes to employ.” In Argyris’ essay, this becomes: “Simon states that it is management’s responsibility (my italics) to inject ‘into their very nervous systems’ the desired objectives and the criteria to be used to judge if these objectives were met... How can Simon imply that some employees would not resist—indeed resent—having their nervous systems so directly managed?” A statement of fact about the nature of organizations becomes, in two simple transformations, a source of moral indignation about nervous-system management, and a have-you-stopped-beating-your-wife implication that I deny that people sometimes resist organizational and social influence.

Reason and Emotion

A major theme of Argyris’ critique is that exaggerated emphasis has been given to the rational component of human behavior at the expense of the emotional and motivational. This allegation is not borne out by examination of the literature itself. The equilibrium of inducements and contributions—a motivational theory—is a central concern for Barnard; three of the seven chapters of Organizations deal almost exclusively with motivational issues; and even Administrative Behavior, whose central theme is bounded rationality, devotes two chapters (chapters 6 and 10), as well as portions of others, to the phenomena of motivation and emotion. In short, the balance between cognitive and affective aspects of behavior in the “rational man” theories is not much different from what it is in typical general psychology textbooks. What most likely concerns Argyris is not a general neglect of affect, but a relative neglect of those aspects of affect—centering on the concepts of “trust,” “openness,” and “self-actualization”—in which he is most interested. This issue will be discussed at length later.

Finally, Argyris’ essay exhibits a curious ambivalence toward the idea of bounded rationality, and the related concept of satisficing. On the one hand, it criticizes theories for being too preoccupied with Man’s rationality. On the other
hand, it criticizes a realistic description and analysis (satisficing theory) of how bounded rationality copes with complexity, indicating the analysis as a major cause of bureaucratic bungling. The popular muckracking book of Levin, *The Satisfiers,* is cited as “documenting the use of the concept of satisficing by bureaucrats to explain away the ‘naturalness’ of their low level of aspirations....” Levin’s book, of course, contains nothing that, even by a stretch of the imagination, could be called scientific evidence or documentation. This passage of Argyris’ critique is a prime example of the perils of casual empiricism.

Argyris claims that “the rational-political view of man is unable to make certain crucial predictions that are central to its domain.” His four examples are unconvincing. The first depends on the empirical claim that management information systems have failed because they are perceived as threats to managerial freedom. That there have been many failures is quite true, but there is a simpler explanation—and one accepted by most observers. Most of the systems devised so far simply did not provide the information that managers perceive as most relevant to their decisions. The second “prediction” is that people will often resist authority. In a moment I will point out how resistance to authority relates to needs for power, a topic discussed extensively in the theories Argyris criticizes. The third “prediction” relates to the supposed use of satisficing theory to rationalize bureaucratic inefficiency. As already noted above, the “evidence” cited here is a popular expose. The fourth “prediction” is that acceptance of the criticized theories will make change in organizations “seem hopeless, if not impossible.” This assertion will also be refuted at length below. What is perhaps the most striking about these examples is the casual way in which various things are asserted to be “facts.” These cavalier paragraphs, by bad example, speak more eloquently than any methodological essay could for more and better empirical research, employing credible standards of evidence.

These are some of the reasons why Argyris’ description of “rational man organization theory” must be read with caution and why anyone who wishes really to know what the theory is about will need to consult the sources. But these inaccuracies in interpretation would hardly be worth comment if they were not associated with broader issues, three of which have already been mentioned: the relation of “is” and “ought” in organization theory, the place of self-actualization in an account of human nature, and the role of power in human affairs.

The Need for Power and Autonomy

As a result of the work of Murray, McClelland, Atkinson, and others, we now have a considerable understanding of human needs for achievement, for affiliation, and for power. We also know that there are large interpersonal differences in the relative strengths of these needs. A balanced account of human motivation in organizations has to provide a significant role for all of them in shaping the feelings, thoughts, and actions of participants.

Argyris’ account of organizations, on the other hand, shows a fascination that amounts almost to obsession with just one of these needs: the need for power. The need for power can be felt and expressed both by those who exercise power and by those over whom power is exercised. Argyris’ portrait of authoritarian management is a portrait of managers who have a paramount need for power and little need for achievement or affiliation. But this portrait of the alienated worker is a portrait of the very same man in the reciprocal role—this time urged by his need for power to rebel against any attempt to control or influence his behavior.

Hence, the world of organizations that Argyris describes is a world oriented toward power in which “who controls” is the central issue that overshadows “what is accomplished” or “who supports whom.” It is precisely in such a power-focused world that it becomes most difficult to establish openness and trust among participants, and “self-actualization” becomes synonymous with anarchy.

Notice that this witch’s brew of dysfunctional consequences cannot be concocted from power alone. It arises out of interaction between a system of interdependences on the one hand, and a high need for power among the participants (managers and managed alike), on the other. A classical issue in the design of organizations and societies is to determine how these dysfunctional consequences can be avoided or mitigated, at the same time permitting the accomplishment of the organization’s tasks (i.e., meeting needs for achievement and affiliation). The human relations school has tended to choose de-emphasis of authority relations as the way out, but at the price of neglecting
the consequences for organizational effectiveness. Another way out, of course, is to find means for shifting human attention from needs for power to needs for achievement and affiliation. A new Lord Acton might say: "What corrupts is not power, but the need for power, and it corrupts both the powerful and the powerless."

A good deal of recent history on university campuses—student unrest, to be specific—can profitably be viewed from this perspective. I refer not to the causes of student unrest, which were many, but to its manifestations. Among the most striking of these were a preoccupation with student power and with freedom from adult power, and an indifference to the goals that the newly won power was to serve. And among the most unpleasant consequences of the expression of power needs was a sudden, dramatic upsurge of mistrust and "closedness" between the warring parties, as well as a willingness to sacrifice the university's resources and its educational objectives to the power struggle. The scenario becomes quite understandable when an increase in concern for power is taken as the causal variable, producing distrust and fear. It is incomprehensible if we try to see a sudden decrease in trust and openness as precipitating the concern for power.

My proposition is a quite classical one in the theory of revolution: that destabilization of a social system, for whatever reason, creates needs for power within each of the self-identified social groups that now finds the relations between "we" and "they" full of uncertainty and threat. It is a proposition quite as applicable to the Cultural Revolution of 1966-69 in Maoist China as to our own period of student unrest.

Preoccupation with power could explain Argyris' complaint that organization theorists who emphasize bounded rationality are oblivious to the emotional component of decision-making processes. Whether Argyris is right in this criticism depends on the facts. In noting the relative dearth of data on emotions in a particular research study, he muses:

This is not because the authors state that no such events took place. They may have taken place—indeed the observer may have carefully noted them—but what was considered as relevant to the analysis was what their theory of problem-solving dictated. Thus one obtains a perceptive and clear description of search activities. But because of the theoretical perspective, there was literally no information on the actual behavior, on how people felt and responded on the impact of the organization's capacity to solve future similar problems.

This "iffy" scenario of what might have been observed evokes several comments. First, one notes the use of the phrase "actual behavior" to denote not the decision reached by the process, but people's feelings about the process. Second, one notes that the organization's future problem-solving capabilities are assumed to depend on the feelings evoked, not on the decision reached. Third, one notes the assumption that these feelings must have been an important component of the process even though they were not observed to be (the "may have...noted" remark is gratuitous).

There is, of course, another possible scenario that the observations reported by the researchers described accurately what actually happened; that the decision process did not evoke strong feelings; and that the feelings actually evoked did not have critical significance for the process. This might seem implausible in an organization whose members had dominant needs for power, and slight needs for achievement; but quite plausible in an organization where the balance of needs was reversed.

Now Argyris' claim, that theory may have blinded observation, has its own two edges. In organizations he has observed, power-oriented behavior seems always to be exceedingly plentiful, goal-oriented rational behavior much less evident. (One wonders how the companies he describes stay in business.) This would not be the first time—in the natural as in the social sciences—that phenomena took on the shape of theory.

But when different descriptions emphasize different phenomena, the conclusions we can validly draw are strictly symmetrical: that one or both sets of observations are incomplete, and that the techniques of observation need improvement. And perhaps even a third conclusion is warranted: that in studying complex phenomena, it is sometimes both possible and desirable to examine particular strands of the whole living reality. Even physics books have separate chapters on heat, light, sound, mechanics, and electricity. They don't try to capture the whole physical world at once.

Meanwhile, we are more or less in the position of the jury that has heard one unsupported witness on each side of the case. Both may have described some part of the facts. Both may have been describing truthfully what they saw. There is no more reason to believe that the one than the other has the better grasp of the reality. Essays will not settle the question; the subject calls for empirical research.
Self-Actualization — What Is It?

Let us leave the need for power for a moment, and turn to self-actualization as a basic human need. It is not easy to determine what either Maslow or Argyris mean by this term. Clearly, they mean it to be a Good Thing, perhaps even the Best Thing, but their characterizations of it are far from precise. It conjures up the image of a Real Self, always present inside somewhere, but usually swaddled and stifled by layers of social and psychological encumbrance.

Postulating a real self that is pre-social is a very basic, and very strong, assumption about the nature of Man. It evokes a Rousseauan state of nature, and indicts society as Man's jailor. I need hardly say that this is only one of several possible theories of Man's nature, and that it can claim little solid empirical support.

Taking self-actualization as the highest human good leads quite simply and logically to the preoccupation with power upon which I commented in the last section. Suppose that Man needs only to be free—first from physical and biological wants, then from the authority of other human beings—in order to seek self-actualization.

Before we embrace self-actualization as the highest good, and especially before we accept authority structures as the main enemy, we need to look carefully at two assumptions. One is the Rousseauan assumption, already mentioned, about Man's basic nature. The second is the assumption, implicit in the previous paragraph, that if we remove the constraints of authority (i.e., the institutions that make extensive use of authority in their operation) in a society that has solved the problem of scarcity, the problem of scarcity will remain solved.

To state the matter more concretely, the United States is today the prime example of a society that has solved the problem of scarcity—although not fully the problem of distributing its plenty to all its members. It has solved the problem of scarcity through an industrial system that makes lavish use of organizations, and considerable use of authority, formal and informal, in their operation. If now, in search of self-actualization, we eliminate those organizational forms, or redesign them to de-emphasize the use of formal authority, will the society remain sufficiently productive to allow opportunity for self-actualization? My own answer to this question is pessimistic, but I would like to have much better evidence than I now have on which to decide such a crucial issue.

But of course the issue is not crucial if we are mistaken in taking self-actualization—in the form in which it is described by Maslow and Argyris—as the main goal of social reform. If many or most can live the good life, not in a state of complete "freedom," but in a social environment that establishes various rules for their game of life at the same time that it is meeting their physical and biological needs; if Man is much more like the social animal described in Administrative Behavior, who finds pattern and meaning from his participation in social systems that possess a certain amount of structure, and that can offer him ideas and values; if much of self-actualization consists in acting with skill and purpose in a well-written play—if this is the kind of world we have and the kind of Man, then there is no basic conflict between Man and Organization. In this kind of world, Man is no more alien to organization or to society than he is to organic and physical nature. Man has weight, and so is acted upon by gravity; he metabolizes, and so must eat; he responds to his fellows, and so must live in social systems; he exercises reason, and so must be provided with an environment sufficiently simple and stable for the limits of his reason.

Maslow and Argyris paint a heroic and romantic picture of Man, a picture of an inexhaustibly creative creature who only needs to be given a blank wall of infinite size in order to paint on it an unimaginably beautiful picture. All the evidence from the fine arts suggests that unlimited freedom is not the best condition for human creativity. The Gothic cathedrals were created not out of unlimited freedom, but out of the stern physical constraints imposed by gravity acting upon masonry walls, and the equally severe social constraints of the Catholic liturgy. Man creates best when he operates in an environment whose constraints are commensurate with the capacities of his bounded rationality. More constraint restricts his creativity, less throws him into confusion and frustration. And the hubris generated by excessive need for power invokes demands for the removal of constraint beyond the point where reason is able to operate.

Is and Ought Revisited

The most serious charge Argyris makes against his opponents' theories is that:
RATIONAL OR SELF-ACTUALIZING?

their view of human nature and their conceptions of what is good theory (i.e., descriptive and not normative) combine to prevent the testing of some of their implications, to maintain the status quo in the real or non-conceived world, thereby ensuring the limited scope of the theory and simultaneously making it difficult to develop sites where competing organizational theories may also be tested.

Notice that the charge is not that the theories are wrong, but that, right or wrong, they are anti-revolutionary and reactionary. We are not to describe social phenomena as they are, because describing them legitimizes them, and makes them harder to change.

True—sometimes! Under some circumstances, describing behavior legitimizes it. The belief that "everybody does it" often rationalizes "it is right to do it." But while this reasoning sometimes maintains the status quo, it equally often supports change—challenges past and present norms (e.g., argues for the legitimation of marijuana).

Under many circumstances, also, describing behavior, far from legitimizing it, leads to demands for changing it. Graphic descriptions of slavery, of urban slums, of war, of oppressive working conditions have always been thought, by artists and others, to be powerful weapons of change (mightier than the sword, it is said!). Marx devoted many more pages to recounting the present ills of present capitalism than to describing the hures of prospective socialism.

Whether description of social reality is revolutionary or conservative depends on whether the reality described strikes people as desirable or undesirable. If that is so, or even approximately so, then wisdom in the decisions of society for conservatism or reform depends on accuracy in the description of the present reality, its consequences, and the consequences of alternatives.

Argyris' argument that we must not describe the world as it is lest we prevent its reform is of a piece with the general anti-rationalism of the contemporary counterculture. No one need be so naive as to believe that the truth shall make us free—inevitably and painlessly. But it is not naive to believe that knowledge—knowledge about the world and about ourselves—is better than ignorance. Nothing in human history refutes that belief, or suggests that we can save mankind by halting descriptive research on the rational aspects of human behavior.

Notice that I am not arguing against the construction and presentation of alternative designs for the future of society. On the contrary, as readers of The Sciences of the Artificial are aware, I attach the utmost importance to such design activity. Invention of alternatives is a critical component in any rational process of choice—and, in the light of the limits of our rationality, one of the hardest components to come by.

But we can evaluate alternative designs only in the light of knowledge and predictions of how those designs would work; and a large part of that knowledge must come from our understanding of the workings of the designs that have already been tried. The normative activity of engineering design rests on the descriptive theories of physics; the normative activity of medicine upon the descriptive theories of biology. There is nothing about social and human phenomena that permits us to devise and test social designs without the corresponding foundation of descriptive knowledge about human and social behavior.

Nevertheless, even if we reject the anti-rationalism implicit in Argyris' argument, one of his claims deserves serious attention. It is his concern that in any particular social system it may be difficult to find sites where alternative systems might be tested.

If Man is the social animal we believe he is, then the social institutions in which he lives change him. The attitudes, values, habits he acquires determine, in turn, how he will behave in the context of these same institutions. If we now try to predict how he will behave in a new set of institutions, taking his traits as given and fixed, we will make mistakes, because we will not allow for the changes in Man that would be produced by living in the new institutions. (Argyris accepts these propositions as applying to contemporary society, but not to the Utopia of self-actualization that he envisages. The fallacy of belief in natural man as an uncaused cause has already been exposed above. Hence, I will state the propositions symmetrically, as applying to all social systems.)

If we do not allow for the ways in which a new social system will make a New Man, our predictions will sometimes be erroneous. But Argyris is wrong in assuming that the errors of prediction must be biased toward conservatism—must lead us to overestimate the costs and underestimate the benefits of the changed society. On the contrary, it is equally likely that we will evaluate the proposed changes too favorably. Misestimation stemming from this cause may as readily work in favor of revolution as in favor of conservation.

For example, consider a society of scarcity in
which it was observed that most people work hard. They may do so because they fear hunger; or their diligence might be a built-in trait. Under the circumstances, we have no way of knowing which is true. Suppose we (optimistically) draw the latter conclusion, and redesign the society so that food is promised to everyone. We may find that the desire to work hard has disappeared in the new society. In this case, our assumption that a socially determined trait was a genetic constant caused us to support social change; while the opposite assumption would have caused us to retain the original system. In our society you can guess pretty accurately who is a Democrat and who is a Republican by their prediction of whether work motivation would remain or disappear in the new society. Acceptance of the present reality of motivation as unchangeable leads to the liberal, not the conservative policy conclusion.

Let's try out another scenario to illustrate the symmetry of the situation:

In the present world, human beings frequently exhibit intolerance for lack of structure. To cite a contemporary example, students who, three years ago, were demanding complete freedom in choice of curriculum are now asking for better defined rules of the academic game. Or, to cite a perhaps more striking example, it is reliably reported that highly creative scholars, spending a year on leave at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, frequently experience a Christmas anxiety crisis as a result of the excess of freedom they have. If intolerance for lack of structure is a culturally determined trait, and not a fixed one, then our frequent observation of it probably works for unwarranted conservatism. It makes us reluctant to experiment with systems where such intolerance would be dysfunctional—systems providing unstructured freedom. Of course if the trait is not culturally modifiable, as it well may not be, then our reluctance is well founded.

Predicting the consequences of social change becomes even more difficult when we cannot agree even about the facts of our present society. Argyris sees in the world of organizations an enormous amount of alienation caused by the need for power of those who have little power. He takes the need for power (and hence the need for almost unlimited freedom as a precondition for attaining self-actualization) as a fixed characteristic of human nature. Given these premises, it is quite logical for him to conclude that hierarchical organizations can have no place in his Utopia.

In the organizational world that I observe, there is much less need for power, and consequently much less alienation than in Argyris's world. I see a social system making use of hierarchical organizations to reach a high level of productivity, and to produce a large quantity of freedom in the form of leisure. I see creative people using that leisure for all sorts of self-actualization.

But in the world that I observe, there is also much less confrontation between authority and personal freedom within the work-day world of formal organizations than Argyris seems to find. In large part, that is because we are using different measuring rods. For Argyris, any exercise of authority is a shackling limitation of freedom and a barrier to self-actualization. My measurements take as their zero point that amount of social structure—including authority—which provides human beings of bounded rationality (that is, all of us) with an understandable, reasonably stable environment for their acting, for their thinking, for their creating, for their dreaming. More structure confines us, less structure throws us into confusion—including that kind of Dionysian confusion that is so celebrated by the counterculture.

In Argyris' Dionysian world, reason is one of the shackles of freedom. The rational man is cold, constrained, incapable of self-actualization and "peak experiences." Man must throw over his reason, must respond to impulse in order to release the swaddled Real Person within.

In my Appolonian world, reason is the handmaiden of freedom and of creativity. It is the instrument that enables me to have peak experiences unimaginable to my cat or my dog. It is the instrument that enables me to dream and design. It is the instrument that enables me and my fellow men to create environments and societies that can satisfy our basic needs, so that all of us—and not just a few—can experience some of the deeper pleasures of sense and mind. And because we depend so heavily upon reason to create and maintain a humane world, we see the need to understand reason better—to construct a tested theory of reasoning man.

To value reason, to attach high importance to it, does not at all imply satisfaction with the status quo, nor denial of emotion. It does argue against relying upon impulse and intuition to tell us what changes in society we should seek to make. Studying history, we see that social systems are not, in fact, very conservative. They undergo the
most radical changes in the most precipitous ways. Even if it were true that "rational man theories" of organization are conservative in their effect upon our society (a conclusion I have already challenged), this would be a poor reason for avoiding them. In our world and in our time there has been no lack of "sites where competing organizational theories may be tested." To mention just two of them, both Russia and China have produced new societies to engender and to be cherished by a New Man. We are far from digesting the findings of those experiments—or of the experiments being made in many other parts of the world—and understanding what are their implications for self-actualization, for freedom, for reason. It is a little hard to argue, with this wealth of undigested and un-understood data before us, that we must suppress valid research on our institutions in order to make it easier to find sites for experiment.

Conclusion

In my remarks here, I have focused attention upon rationality, upon the need for power, upon work motivation and the need for achievement, and upon self-actualization. These are only a few of the many strands that must be woven into the design of a human institution if that institution is to be viable. But they are sufficient to remind us of the complexity of institutional design, and the dangers of building the design around a single factor.

In the descriptive activity of science, we are free to study subsystems—to abstract out a part of the whole reality in order to achieve a more thorough understanding of that part. The worst one can say of the organizational theories that Argyris criticizes is that they may sometimes single out the processes of rational thought and decision for special attention, at some expense to other processes. Even this charge is, as we have seen, open to question.

When we come to the normative activity of design, we have no such freedom to abstract. Our task is to design institutions that perform their essential social functions—produce a society's food, for example, or educate its young—at the same time that they satisfy important human needs of those who manage and man them. Among those needs is the need to live in a social environment that gives structure and calculability to life; to have access to norms and rules that guide action until creative discovery suggests interesting and useful ways to modify them. Man is not an imperious creature, unable to tolerate any and all authority exercised over him. He often welcomes authority, when it is exercised with moderation, and when it helps him and his fellows to achieve goals they think important.

Reason plays a dual role, then, in social institutions. It is a tool that enables those institutions to act effectively toward goals. And it is also the instrument through which Man sees the world and his own life, understands them, and invests them with meaning. In all the societies where a New Man has been created, or where there has been an attempt to create him, the historical evidence gives not the slightest hint that Man can survive, or want to survive, without orderly structures of authority and heavy dependence on rational processes, or that a free, self-actualized inner Man emerges when authority structures are destroyed.

The society we live in maintains a delicate balance between human freedom and social constraint. From time to time, we may wish to shift that balance, but with due care that we not destroy it. We can point to no other society in human history that has come even close to ours in offering such a balance, not only to the few but to the many. We would do well to understand thoroughly how the system is constructed. After we disassemble it, we might want very badly to put it together again.