

when there is more than a remnant ready to listen to them. If the currents weren't flowing in two directions at once, saviors would have to wait.

Mr. Read quotes an unknown savant who said that "if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem." The first step toward becoming part of the solution is to cease doing wrong (in this case, to cease trying to live by and through the State, which has no money of its own to give away). The second step is to become a creative thinker and expositor of the freedom philosophy. The third step is to be such an exemplar that others will seek your tutorship. Though Mr. Read counsels humility, it is obvious that he is a most convincing third-stage exemplar. He made his critical decision when he decided there was more to economics than economics itself.

► **TWILIGHT OF AUTHORITY** by Robert Nisbet. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975) 287 pp., \$10.95.

Reviewed by Haven Bradford Gow

WESTERN CIVILIZATION and America in particular is in a state of decadence. Mr. Nisbet discerns America's decline in such indices as the decay of values, the deifica-

tion of the self, the erosion of patriotism, the loss of faith in our institutions, the militarization of our society and the centralizing of power in the hands of the state, increasing hedonism, the rising rate of crime and social disorder, waning belief in heroes, the corruption of language, the disintegration of traditional social and moral authority, the destruction of human loyalties and the loss of a sense of social roots. It is America's "twilight age," a political, moral and cultural crisis similar to that which marked the decline and fall of Rome.

By "the loss of social roots," Mr. Nisbet means the decline of "the local community, the dislocation of kinship, and the erosion of the sacred in human affairs." He cites the rebellion of youth against any and all forms of parental domination, the perpetually rising divorce rates, the shunting aside of traditional family for novel forms of communal living, and the women's liberation movement as evidence of the decline of the family's "functional importance in the social order." Ironically, as Mr. Nisbet observes, the disintegration of, and virulent assaults upon, the family are occurring at a time when we are beginning to learn how very important the family is in such crucial areas as individual motivation, the ability to learn, and personality,

sexual and moral devopment. Numerous studies buttress the recognition that while the school, peer group and church do indeed have a tremendous influence upon the mind of a child, these influences nevertheless are "comparatively weak" in comparison with the pervasive influence of the family.

Is it too late to arrest, perhaps even reverse, the pernicious trend toward political Leviathan on the one hand and the disintegration of the social order on the other? Mr. Nisbet finds no reason for optimism, for the ranks of "those still committed to the private sector, to the social sphere, and to the individual liberties within each of these, become progressively thinner, their voices increasingly muted."

Mr. Nisbet, though, does provide some reflections concerning "what a genuine social regeneration in the West might consist of—either as a consequence of historical factors now only dimly to be seen or foreseen or of direct, enlightened statesmanship." Briefly, Mr. Nisbet argues for the decentralization of cultural, economic and political power; he contends that the concentration of power in the hands of the state inevitably leads to the diminution of personal liberty. He makes a sharp distinction between state and society, and points out that there are areas of life beyond the compe-

tence of politics and of the state to cope with. Closely connected with the distinction between state and society is the need to "recover the social," that is, the need to reaffirm and strengthen a sense of community, kinship, and social roots, and such social institutions as marriage, family, the church, and other kinds of self-help and charitable organizations and associations. By so doing, we may still be able to reverse the trend toward the total state and achieve order in the soul and in the commonwealth.

► THE PSEUDO-SCIENCE OF B.F. SKINNER by Tibor Machan. (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House) 224 pp., \$9.95

Reviewed by Haven Bradford Gow

B. F. SKINNER believes that man's behavior and choices are determined by processes beyond his control; man is nothing more than an animal who reacts blindly to stimuli in his environment. Freedom and dignity, therefore, are just "myths;" they cannot be "scientifically verified," that is, weighed or measured.


The author, on the other hand, contends that Mr. Skinner's view of freedom is the myth, and to check it he has written a much-needed af-

firmation of man's dignity and freedom, and a hard-hitting attack on the thinking of those social scientists and philosophers who deny man's moral worth and freedom.

Dr. Machan points out that the attacks on free will—i.e., man's inherent capacity to make free choices and judgments—are based upon a warped view of man, the view that man is simply a machine. True, man has a material body, but he is also a spiritual being. Human beings have the capacity to reason, to conceptualize, to grasp universals, to utilize and comprehend symbols, to express in written word and in propositional speech their private thoughts and feelings. Man can love and hate, he can cry and understand and laugh at the meaning of a joke. Clearly, if man's freedom, moral worth and uniqueness cannot be verified through the techniques of the laboratory, this is no proof that these qualities do not exist. They are indeed real, even though their reality cannot be chemically analyzed or weighed.

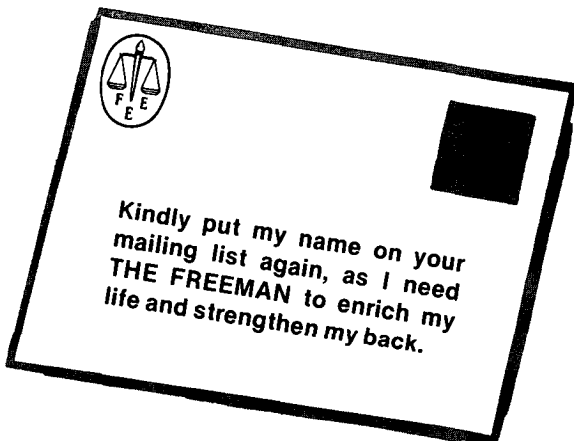
There is an obvious relation be-

tween the Skinnerian view of man and freedom on the one hand and pernicious attempts in our time to wrest away man's political liberty and concentrate decision-making power and authority in the hands of a few. If, as Mr. Skinner claims, the "survival of the culture" is the highest value, and individual freedom and dignity are just "myths," then man's political liberty may be sacrificed. Mr. Skinner and his followers would then "feel free" to use scientific know-how and technology to manipulate man and his environment to achieve their desired results.

On the other hand, if, as Dr. Machan believes, man has the capacity to reason and also possesses free will and dignity, then proposals and efforts to manipulate man through science and technology are virulent assaults on man himself. Let us, instead, cultivate and preserve those institutions and those social, economic and political conditions which help human beings to live rationally and freely choose good over evil. 

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missed . . .*

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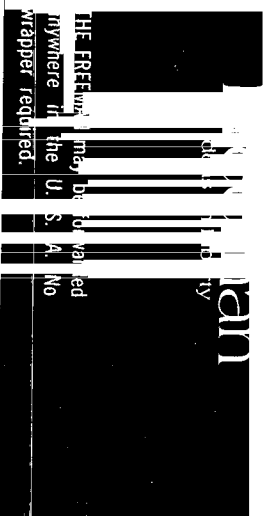
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