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# Political "Evolution" and Youth

by **Richard Ward**

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Under the colonial scheme of things, this vast North American wilderness was called not “England” but “New England.” And whatever “progress” that had made England into “Great Britain” has been wrongly attributed to leaders, to politicians. The truth is that, because of Britain’s advancement of Biblical Christianity, the people of England had been generously and generally blessed by GOD, and that *in spite of* rather than *because of* its absurd, Monarchy-pretending **OLIGARCHY**.

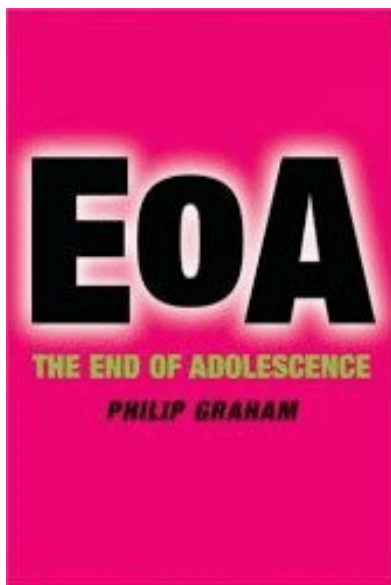
Fast forward to 2004 and Oxford University Press’ *The End of Adolescence* by psychiatrist Phillip J. Graham.<sup>1</sup> Of this book, one unidentified reviewer at Amazon Books has written:

On television, in the newspapers, **even in textbooks of psychology**, the teen years are portrayed as 'bad news'. Adolescents are seen as moody, rebellious, promiscuous, immature, aggressive and lazy. Their behaviour is seen as getting worse as we move into the twenty first century. **In fact the majority of young people have none of**

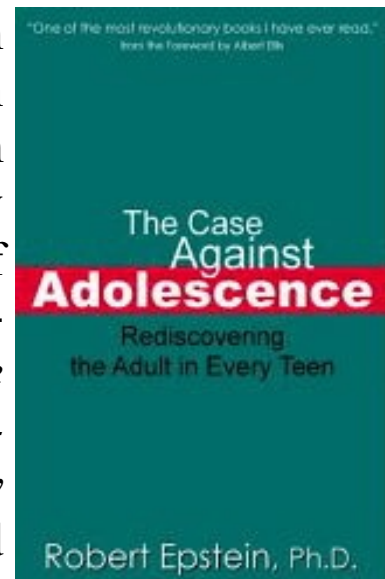
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<sup>1</sup> Philip Graham is a Emeritus Professor of Child Psychiatry, Institute of Child Health, London.

these objectionable characteristics. Adolescents have always been stigmatized as they are today and it is widely thought that it is 'natural' for the teens to be a 'difficult' phase of life. But it is the adult world that has created the world of adolescence and the adult world that is finding it difficult to live with what it has manufactured. This book puts forward an entirely new way of looking at adolescence. Written by a leading child psychiatrist, it starts by describing the myths that pervade the popular view of adolescence. After a brief description of the history of adolescence, it goes on to examine the way the teens actually function in families, giving particular attention to approaches that result in positive outcomes. Discussing moodiness, conflict, sexual behaviour, drugs and alcohol, and eating patterns, it adopts the same questioning but positive approach. The book then looks at how the sense of frustration and failure many teenagers experience at school and in their neighbourhoods might be overcome by giving them a level of responsibility that matches their competence. This book will be of great value to parents of teenagers and those whose children are just about to become teenagers, as well as teachers, psychologists, and anyone whose work brings them in touch with young people.



Then, little more than three years after the Graham book (*l.*), there appeared on the market what is virtually an American plagiarism of the Englishman's work, Robert Epstein's *The Case Against Adolescence: Rediscovering the Adult in Every Teen* (*r.*) which was released March 1, 2007.<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>2</sup> Robert Epstein received his Ph.D. in psychology in 1981 from Harvard University. He has published more than 70 scholarly and scientific articles in journals such as Science, Nature, and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, and

Writing here for an American audience, we shall focus on Epstein's version of what is the same message, one lamenting the assertion that almost everything we do serves to tell teenagers that they're incompetent. Epstein and Graham agree on this, that teens are what they are today largely because the adult world has taught them how to be that way.

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**A professor is one who talks in someone else's sleep.**

— *Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973)*

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Like all members-in-good-standing of the “International Union of Scholars,” Robert Epstein puts great trust in statistics, especially findings put out by other members of his own club. *Time Magazine* columnist John Cloud, for instance, began his review of Epstein's book by citing the following statistics:

... Despite those rare school shootings reporters cover with such lip-licking zeal, the rate of **school violence** fell from 48 crimes per 1,000 students in 1992 to 22 per 1,000 in 2004, according to the Department of Education. In raw terms, the number of **student crimes** (including theft) shrank from 3.4 million

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he is the author of Generativity Theory, a formal, scientific theory of creativity. His research on creativity and problem solving has been reported in Time magazine, the New York Times, and Discover. He is author of a book on self-control and of the recent books *Cognition, Creativity, and Behavior: Selected Essays* (Praeger) and *Creativity Games* (McGraw-Hill). He is also the editor of two books of the writings of the late Professor B. F. Skinner. Dr. Epstein is the founder and Director Emeritus of the Cambridge Center for Behavioral Studies in Massachusetts and has served on the faculties of Boston University, Northeastern University, Simmons College, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and the University of California San Diego. He maintains a laboratory at the Center for Behavioral Epidemiology of the Graduate School of Public Health at San Diego State University. He also directs an annual computer contest offering \$100,000 to the designers of the first computer to convince people it's human. His popular writings have appeared in Reader's Digest, Parenting, The Washington Post, and other magazines and newspapers, and his commentaries on AIDS, behavioral medicine, and other topics have aired worldwide on the Voice of America and National Public Radio. He has served as the Chair of the Psychology Department at National University and in 1994 and 1995 served as that university's first Research Professor. He was recently appointed a consulting editor to Psychology Today.

to 1.4 million in that period, even as the U.S. teen population grew by 5.4 million kids...<sup>3</sup>

After citing the “astonishing” statistic that the **murder** rate for 12-to-17-year-olds “plummeted” 68% between 1993 and 2003, Cloud then turned to the other problems usually associated with adolescents.

... In 1995, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 19% of surveyed school kids said they had used an **illegal drug** in the past month; in 2005 16% did. That’s a small dip, but kids’ **smoking** tumbled 40% during the same period. And teens’ use of **alcohol** is also down, despite stories you may have seen about parents’ letting their high schoolers drink. Nearly 40% of teens reported drinking in the past month in 1995; less than a third did in 2005. Plus, the teen **pregnancy** rate is the lowest since 1976, and the teen **suicide** rate is lower today than in 1980.<sup>4</sup>

Like Graham and Epstein, John Cloud and *Time Magazine* too make great use of polls and statistics, always to “prove” the very idea that they had already decided to popularize.

There might be an honest polling company out there, but I play it safe by not believing any of them. I didn’t believe them back in the mid-1970s, and I don’t today. In the “before-and-after” statistics cited by Cloud above, I can’t believe the “after” figure because I didn’t believe the “before” figure back when the “before” year was “now.”

Back in 1976 when I was Principal of Greenfield Elementary/Junior High School, my good friend Jim Blackman of Blackman’s Hardware was also our Chief-of-Police. In one of my many consultations with him, Jim informed me that 80% of

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<sup>3</sup> Cloud, John, “Parents: Relax. Teens are acting more responsibly. It may even be time to reward them with some of the rights adults have,” *Time*, April 9, 2007; Vol. 169, No. 15; pp.114-15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Greenfield kids had “experimented” with marijuana. Even as the Chief-of-Police and on the nighttime beat, how could Jim possibly have known this? Even if you limit his statistic to the high school population (which was not under my professional supervision), how could it be that 80% of the dear kids I had helped raise had fallen for the dope pushers’ lure? If the statistic had been, say, 10% or even 15%, I wouldn’t have flinched, human nature being such as it is and drug abuse being as widespread as it was then rumored to have been. But 50%, not to mention 80%, was to my mind preposterous.

Ah but then, sez I, aren’t the parents and teachers going to be the last ones to know? Maybe Jim knows better than I, especially since he’s the one who cruises around town at night and sees what he sees – or is it that he cruises around town and suspects what he suspects? After all, his job is that of arresting wrong-doers. If 80% of Greenfield’s high schoolers have not been arrested by the Greenfield Police Department, then doesn’t that say something about the statistic?

But Jim’s no liar. If he didn’t get the 80% estimate of marijuana abuse in Greenfield Tennessee from his own personal experience, then where did he get it? I don’t know. It might have been some law enforcement bulletin, the *Police Gazette*, or a notice from the county Sheriff that, in parroting an equally nebulous “national statistic,” had led Jim to presumably conclude that Greenfield was “probably close to average.” It reminds me of the *Cold Case Files* television show where every town would express the exact same sentiment, that \_\_\_\_\_ is [quote] “the last place where you’d expect a murder to happen.”

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**Beware that you do not lose the substance  
by grasping at the shadow.** — *Aesop Fables c. 550 B.C.*

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The plain truth is that polling is worse than “an inexact science” as some call it. From start to finish, public opinion and other such polling-for-publicity purposes is fraudulent, a confidence game if you please, a sham, a racket. If it wasn’t that way from its inception, then it quickly became exactly that due to the wishes of the paying client. Do we ever see a political advertiser giving polling results which are unfavorable towards himself? Never!

We need not examine all the technical matters about this pseudo-science to know that the polling industry would have crumbled long ago had it routinely failed to reach the findings desired and expected by its paying customers. Questions about how the pollster orders, words, and frames the questionnaire prompts are just the tip of the iceberg that is a playground for said industry’s psycho-engineers.

One thing that is noteworthy about Adolescence is that phenomenon which arises at about grade six and lingers until the closeout year of undergraduate school at the college level. I speak of the POPULARITY CONTEST. Where there might be a sense in which “all of Life is a popularity contest,” the ritualistic formalizing of it pretty much starts and finishes on the leading and trailing outskirts of Adolescence. “Cutest Boy” and “Cutest Girl” are elected only during Adolescence; it’s strictly a puberty thing. It was immediately noticeable upon entering graduate school that it was goodbye to the formal, already-faded POPULARITY CONTEST.

Oh, oh. I just said that the POPULARITY CONTEST is strictly a puberty or adolescent thing. Well, yes, formally electing “the most popular” fellow or girl is still a very adolescent thing to do ~ but no, that period in our growing-up years is not where the painfully adolescent practice ends. For throughout Adulthood

we all are regularly and periodically called upon to voluntarily participate in or at least forced to witness as spectators just such childishness, all because all so-called “popular elections” are actually nothing more than gigantic, out-of-order POPULARITY CONTESTS which, while appropriate to teenagers, are grossly unbecoming for full-grown adults.

Back at Greenfield High School, the annual POPULARITY CONTEST fits perfectly because all the participants – the candidates and the voters alike – are real, live adolescents. There the POPULARITY CONTEST is proper, fitting, appropriate, and timely. But when we become Men, GOD and His Nature both order us to put away childish things.<sup>5</sup>

Ah, but alas, **we don't!** In fact, we puff up and then roundly pervert the puberty thing, transforming it into the “grandest” round-the-clock/round-the-calendar, three-ring celebrity circus in the world of Adulthood.

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**Politics is perhaps the only profession for which  
no preparation is thought necessary.**

*— Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94)*

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Back in Civics class in 1950, Miss Martha Wheeler explained to us ninth-graders that “**an informed electorate**” is essential to “popular elections,” that the involvement of only voters who had a reasonably full grasp of all the issues at stake and of all the candidates running was absolutely necessary if such elections were to manifest the “democratic-ness” that is imperative in any real Republic. So, then, what is it that these POPULARITY CONTESTS are supposed to have provided us all these years? ~ Representation, that being “representatives” who can truly represent We-the-People because they themselves are

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<sup>5</sup> I Corinthians 13:11, *KJV*

representative of We-the-People, that is, they are more or less “average” when it comes to being like us, like “We-the-People.”

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**The great masses of the people . . . will more easily fall victims to a great lie than to a small one.**

— Adolph Hitler (1889-1945)

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Hey! But a POPULARITY CONTEST doesn't seek out the ordinary or typical person. From start-to-finish, its whole purpose is **just the opposite** — to find and then exalt the extraordinary person, the one who is “better than” all the rest of us, the ordinary, average, “We-the-People” type of persons. And the POPULARITY CONTEST at the adult level – it's horribly worse than at the passing adolescent stage. For the candidate for “Mr. GHS” is not required to parade himself around, bragging about his virtues, boasting of his accomplishments, begging his schoolmates for their votes and promising all sorts of benefits “if I am elected,” raising money and buying expensive advertising, showing off his family, signing autographs, and then only pretending – *Sigh!* – Humil it y. No. Aside from special recognition in that year's yearbook and perhaps an extra blurb later on his employment *resumé*, the class favorite gets nothing in particular from the honor and certainly doesn't do any “campaigning” in order to win, much less to win it again and again and again, year after year, on and on *ad nauseam* for life.

Ah, but the POPULARITY CONTEST in the adult world ~ that's an entirely different deal. Here we are looking at the contrasting pictures of a wholesome, everybody-knows-everybody, adolescent passivity *versus* the unseemly and brazen arrogance of adult grandstanding and finagling because nobody knows anybody. But, worst of all, the defense and welfare of our entire



country, thanks to this appeal to nothing more than public vanity – “I voted wisely!” – is placed into the hands of the very strangest members of our society. And these strange newcomers learn from the outset that their first obligation actually is not to the interests of the monkey-see/monkey-do voting *majority* but, instead instead instead, to their professional, mainstream popularizing *minority* and, in particular, to the wishes of the *tiny handful* of moguls who quietly head up all the branches of that combine I call “Propaganda Central USA.”

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**The rich man has his motor car, his country and his town estate. He smokes a fifty-cent cigar and jeers at Fate.**

— *Franklin Pierce Adams (1881-1960)*

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Electioneering epitomizes the artificiality of Human Life when it has been placed under the political authority of the self-centered, egomaniacal elitists of rule-by-the-few-Oligarchy. The reigning oligarches are the owners of Press and Media and the owners of those vast corporations which advertise through those same propaganda outlets. Yes indeed, we’re talking “conspiracy” simply because conspiracy is not “out of the question,” because **conspiracy in the highest places of commerce, finance, and government** is not as “impossible” or as “theoretical-only” as smart, high-ranking, conspiring, and treasonous conspirators would so tirelessly condition us to think.

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**The prince of darkness is a gentleman.**

— *King Lear (Shakespeare, 1564-1616)*

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American Politics with its constitutional republican representation, democratic field leveling, and Public Service are all far too important in life-or-death terms to be entrusted into the hands of just the shameless and arrogantly ruthless popularity freaks, even if they do spring oh-so-anxiously right out of our

very own midst. Election-by-Lot is “too chancy” only if you are too-devout a believer in such things as “chance,” “luck,” “hap,” “accident,” “coincidence,” and “randomness.”

However, if you believe instead in Divine Providence, you are bound to accept the results of EL as either (a) “GOD’S *perfect* will” or else (b) “GOD’S *permissive* will” ~ either way, a or b, to the Bible-believing Christian it’s “A-OK.” Ah but, likewise, your neighbor who believes in “chance” would readily accept the EL result as “fair” too, just as long as he – like everybody else – thinks the Gaming and Election Commission combine has done its job well in keeping the lottery honest and perfectly – as it were – “chancy.” So that means that election results under the EL system would be equally acceptable to the godly and the secular citizens alike. How refreshing in this day and time to find a situation, albeit presently only hypothetical, where spiritual enemies can find such practical agreement.

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**Goodbye Grover’s Corners . . . Oh, earth, you’re too wonderful for anybody to realize you. Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? — Thornton Wilder (1897-1975)**

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Under EL, all “campaigning” and political parties and those damnedable “party platforms” and that root-of-all-evil campaign fund-raising all automatically vanish. No more party bosses. No more expensive “party primaries.” No more lawyer domination of all of Public Service. No more political promises. No more yard-sign litter, and – *Gasp!* – no more Strom-Thurmondish *career* politicians. If new ways and means for corrupting lobbying were to develop under EL, it would have to be 2-4-6-year speedy and, therefore, cumbersome and easily unmasked. And no more of those rude “entitlements” automatically passing from one administration to the next. And probably no more of those Obama health-care packages where remote, totally unre-

lated amendments are attached as lures for spineless, “agginner” legislators’ votes.

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**Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.**

**Great men are always bad men.** — *Lord John Acton (1834-1902)*

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Even rabid socialists have long known Oligarchy is America’s chosen form of government. Henry George, Jr., in the Preface to his *The Menace of Privilege: A Study of the Dangers to the Republic from the Existence of a Favored Class* (MacMillan, 1906), gave this challenge:

The Republic rightly boasts of great achievements, and it has in reserve power for great things to come. But half-way measures will be worse than futile, since they will give growing time to Privilege. **The one sure way to cure the ills that afflict the nation** is to destroy Privilege at the root. And that, and only that, accords with the mandates of Justice.

I heartily agree with Mr. George regarding his disdain for (unfairly government-gotten) “Privilege” which he and I both equate with “a favored class” and which I furthermore identify as all of that big-moneyed ruling minority who make up America’s Oligarchy. However, in the line above which I have taken the liberty of highlighting, we have George’s proverbial “pig in a poke.” Where we see that destroying “Privilege at the root” is the right objective, exactly what is this socialist’s “one sure way to cure the ills that afflict the nation?” – *i.e.*, his method for destroying said “Privilege?”

Well, we can start off by telling you that his solution and ours are miles apart. Our solution is EL, Election by Lot, America and the States being ruled by “the People” instead of by one odd, peculiar, and lawyerly segment OF “the People.” But the method favored by Henry George, Jr., and by his more famous namesake and politician father, had to do with **land**, real estate,

and with who or what should be the rightful owners of it. We're not going to dig deeply into this "Georgeism" beyond lifting the following quote of Jr.'s from an October 28, 1785 letter from Thomas Jefferson to a "Rev. James Madison." Penned from France, Jefferson wrote:

Whenever there are in any country uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for men to labor and live on. If, for the encouragement of industry, **we** allow it to be appropriated, **we** must take care that other employment be provided for those excluded from the appropriation. If **we** do not, the fundamental right to labor the earth returns to the unemployed.

The Georges had their chance a century ago, and the "laws of property" are still violating "natural right" and and and favoring the privileged, ruling-class oligarchical minority heirs are still our masters, the politicians their servants, not ours.

It is time for this *pseudo*-Republic to be made into a real and genuie Republic, for *faux*-democracy to be made into real and full democracy. It is time for America to lead the way for all of Mankind in puting away the childish thing of adolescently formalized POPULARITY CONTESTS and to establish, once and for all and forever, **EL**.

