

The Rise of the Intellectual and the Fall of Civilization

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Once, long ago, in a faraway land called Scholastica, men shouted praise to learning. They had seen the wonderful things learning had done for them—freedom from disease; power unimaginable by breaking apart a speck of matter; boxes of colored, speaking images; beauty; wealth, and prosperity—and they made the Intellectual their hero.

But the Intellectuals began to assume authority in areas outside of their knowledge. The prophets cried, "Sham," but they were ignored. In Californiam (Western Scholastica) an entertainer of men became ruler. In the capital, a pediatrician became an authority on the conflict with the Yellow People in the East.

The Intellectuals began to think their beliefs were beyond question. In the schools the Intellectuals gave their students only certain books and told them what to find in them. The students learned well. They knew all of the great periods of literature; they could tell an eighteenth century rationalist from a nineteenth century romanticist. And when tests came, the students wasted no time in filling-in the little black boxes. But somehow the Great Ideas meant little to them and were quickly forgotten after the test.

In the government, also, the Intellectuals could not bear to see their authority questioned. Some students who thought the fight against the Yellow People was not fair were jailed. The students became angry and talked so much against the government and so much for the little Yellow People that they began to believe that the little fellows were really good.

Then a new and explosive condition arose in the East—the Yellow People had united and started a terrible war against all of Scholastica. The Intellectuals again assumed authority outside of their knowledge. They became the generals (and were the first to succumb). The men of Scholastica knew the difference between an eighteenth century rationalist and a nineteenth century romanticist, but they could not respond to this personal situation. They knew what they were supposed to feel, but they had no thoughts of their own. . . .

And the little Yellow People feasted upon the bones of the Intellectuals and the rotted fruit of Scholastica.