● *midjourney.com*

But I see it as a dual process, whereby childhood is elevated as quite important, and children are seen as being somehow a group that's very distinct from their parents and their grandparents. And what you have is a kind of dual process of trying to influence children, which on the one hand, leads to the adultification of children, as well as their infantilization.

So it's a process that I see as being a little bit different: It doesn't disappear, but it becomes a terrain on which adult concerns get recycled and played out.

Then we come to the matter of adulthood and all of the contradictions you have described. Why was it that before this identity crisis, people didn't have this much contradiction in their adulthood?

I think that until relatively modern times, people didn't ask the question of: "Who am I? And who are they?" People just knew who they were because of the circumstances they were living in, and the communities that they were living in. There was a very kind of clear, organic connection between the generations, even when there were disputes between generations. People knew that who they were. The kind of problems they had was not answering the question: "What is my identity?" For them, the question was: "Can I live up to the expectations that my community has of me?" It was a very different kind of feeling. Yeah. This is what being a French person is, or an English person is. This is what being a son or a daughter of a blacksmith or a doctor is: "Can I live up to what my parents expect of me?" Rather than basically, "Who am I?" and feeling that your core of identity hasn't been tackled.

That is quite a bold claim that before the modern times people didn't ask the question, "Who am I?" For example, I remember the mystic poet Rumi, who is very well known in the West, and one of the lines of Rumi was that, "You are what you seek." I mean, the question goes back to a very long time ago. So, if I want to reconcile those evidence with your claim, I might say that at least it was not a very wide question or query, or a social issue. Maybe some sophisticated people asked that question, but that was not something that the whole communities were concerned with. Is that right?

Well, there's a difference between the way that poets and painters and artists and philosophers viewed the world and knew their place in the world. But when you say that, "I am defined by what I seek, or the journey that I'm on", it is something that you'll pretty much find already among the ancient Greeks. But they don't worry about their identity, because for them, identity means sameness rather than difference. They're very different kinds of attitudes. What he really meant was that, in seeking something, you are basically trying to find yourself, but even the question of understanding yourself better and knowing yourself wasn't a question of having this kind of fixed identity that you had to confront. So, the first time, as I wrote in the book, that the identity issue is discussed in its modern sense, is when Sigmund Freud the psychia- trist in Berlin, talked about his Jewish identity, but he only talked about it in that one place, and he never returned to that subject. And of course, it's understandable that Jews would be the amongst the first to react that way because they were on the margins of the society. They weren't integrated into in the same kind of way as other people. Then the seeking of identity really explodes when American soldiers returned after Second World War, and they find that life has changed in America so much and they don't seem to have a place in there anymore.

TO BE CONTINUED

↑ *Portrait XVII, shown in 'Identity' exhibition in 2019, which included a series of 20 prints by Anthony Davies made using Stone lithography.*
● *spacestudiogallery.co.nz*

About the book:
100 Years of Identity Crisis

The concept of Identity Crisis came into usage in the 1940s and it has continued to dominate the cultural zeitgeist ever since. In his exploration of the historical origins of this development, Frank Furedi argues that the principal driver of the 'crisis of identity' was and continues to be the conflict surrounding the socialisation of young people. In turn, the politicisation of this conflict provides a terrain on which the Culture Wars and the politicisation of identity can flourish. Through exploring the interaction between the problems of socialisation and identity, this study offers a unique account of the origins and rise of the Culture Wars.