

The younger Darwin's most fascinating argument is that lasting social change is brought about by what he calls "creeds," religious and secular, not by politics: "The intellectual adoption of a policy thus often hardly survives for more than a single generation, and this is too short a period for such a policy to overcome the tremendous effects of pure chance. But if the policy can arouse enough enthusiasm to be incorporated in a creed, then there is at least a prospect that it will continue for something like ten generations. ... That is why creeds are so tremendously important for the future; a creed gives the best *practical* hope that a policy will endure well beyond the life of its author, and so it gives the best practical hope that man can have for really controlling his future fate."

MICHAEL LIND, the Whitehead Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation, is the author of *The American Way of Strategy*.

John R. MacArthur I'm pretty tired of travel writing as a genre. My well-traveled wife likes to remind me that traveling to interesting places doesn't necessarily make for interesting people, and travel writers, including the professionals, aren't all that different from the norm. To get my attention, it's usually got to be heavy-duty reporting by world-famous writers such as Graham Greene or Ryszard Kapuscinski.

There's one exception. High on my best-books list is the most obscure travel book I know: *All the Time in the World* by Hugo Williams, the poet and "Freelance" columnist for the *Times Literary Supplement*. I've never met anyone who has heard of the book, and Williams never seems to refer to it.

In the early 1960s, he spent two years circling the globe using surface transport; the resulting narrative is a classic of youthful, unaffected observation, keenly felt and beautifully rendered. Who else but a good poet would dare begin a travel book with "Venice was cold and dark," then introduce a young woman who "hadn't at all liked Venice"? For her, "everything was so depressing and dull. Even the gondolas were painted black and everything had been shut up for the winter. Why couldn't they paint the river-boats yellow or something?" Fortunately, Williams is a good deal more cheerful and has a much better time.

JOHN R. MACARTHUR is president and publisher of Harper's.

Justin Raimondo Novelist, journalist, editor, and polemicist of the Old Right, Garet Garrett authored some 15 books. No more elegantly written and elegiac account of how we lost our freedom and gained

an empire exists than his three slender volumes on the rise of the welfare-warfare state. Published separately in pamphlet-sized editions by Caxton Printers some 60 years ago, they were reprinted in 2004 in a single volume entitled *Ex America*. The new title succinctly summarized Garrett's theme—that the triumph of the New Deal and the attack on Pearl Harbor robbed the country of its essential character, its historical reason for being: "There are those who still think they are holding the pass against a revolution that may be coming up the road. But they are gazing in the wrong direction. The revolution is behind them. It went by in the Night of Depression, singing songs to freedom."

So opens the first volume, *The Revolution Was*, written in 1938, which details the ways in which we lost our Old Republic to "your scientific revolutionary in spectacles" and became something else. The essay is narrated in his unique style, which somehow manages to combine the implacability of Cato the Elder with the prophetic precision of Cassandra.

Like all good writers, Garrett excelled at openings. Try this one on for size, the opening lines of *Rise of Empire*: "We have crossed the boundary that lies between Republic and Empire. If you ask when, the answer is that you cannot make a single stroke between day and night." Or consider the first line of "Ex America," the title essay of the 2004 volume: "The winds that blow our billions away return burdened with themes of scorn and dispraise." As Pakistan disdains the tripling of its foreign aid allotment as an attack on its sovereignty, this might have been written in 2009 instead of 1951.

JUSTIN RAIMONDO is the author of several books including the recently re-released *Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement*.

Alfred S. Regnery Book publishers know better than most that unheard-of books are a dime a dozen. But how about a never-heard-of biography of one of the best-known figures of 19th-century America who is now, himself, virtually unheard of?

When William Wirt died in 1834, Daniel Webster and Chief Justice John Marshall spoke in his honor in the U.S. Supreme Court. His funeral was attended by President Andrew Jackson; VP John Calhoun; John Quincy Adams, who gave a eulogy to a joint session of Congress; the Cabinet; and just about everybody who was anybody in Washington. William Wirt? Who was William Wirt?

He was the longest serving attorney general of the United States, serving under James Madison, James Monroe, and John Quincy Adams, and he still holds the record for cases argued before the Supreme Court. He was one of the prosecutors in the 1807 treason trial against Vice President Aaron Burr, was

widely known for his literary prowess, and turned down Thomas Jefferson's offer to be the first president of the University of Virginia. Few men have accomplished so much, and few who have done so much are so forgotten.

We regularly marvel at the genius of the founding fathers, but forget that there were a host of lesser-known figures whose contributions, if we knew them, would astound us. *Adopted Son: The Life, Wit, and Wisdom of William Wirt, 1772-1834* by Gregory Glassner (with a forward by Sen. Eugene McCarthy) is a very readable biography, and it is the only thing in print on Wirt. Were it were better known, Wirt might be as well.

ALFRED S. REGNERY is publisher of *The American Spectator*.

George Scialabba Few books I know begin as winningly as D.H. Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, a sequel to his not very well-received *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*:

I warn the generality of readers that the present book will seem to them only a rather more revolting mass of wordy nonsense than the last. I would warn the generality of critics to throw it in the wastepaper basket without more ado.

By and large, this is what the generality of critics have done since 1921, tossing also the rest of Lawrence's nonfiction, except the travel books and the essays on sex, pornography, and censorship. It is an understandable reaction: one is often hard put to believe that Lawrence means what he seems to be saying; it is more comfortable to mutter about the madness of genius, the striking intellectual eccentricity of so many great imaginative artists, etc. For the frail miner's son arraigned the whole proud edifice of modern thought.

Lawrence's unconscious is not Freud's. Freud's unconscious is a swamp, which psychoanalytic reason must drain and reclaim. Lawrence's Unconscious is a vital power: the ineffable source of life, a monarch ruling and subsuming the whole field of bodily planes, plexuses, and ganglions, completely individual but connected by quick, subtle threads to the entire cosmos. *Fantasia* is a pagan metaphysical psycho-physiology, at once primitive and post-modern, archaic and disillusioned, sardonic and incantatory. And though we scoff, Lawrence taunts us back: "Thin-minded [rationalists] cannot bear any appeal to their bowels of comprehension." To understand with our bowels and blood may be dangerous, but it is also, Lawrence argued more persuasively than anyone else, indispensable.

GEORGE SCIALABBA is the author of *Divided Mind* and *What Are Intellectuals Good For?*

Sam Tanenhaus At a time, lasting many years now, when American political debate is continually cheapened by the presumed (but false) conflict between "intellectuals" and "ordinary citizens"—as if the first category were not in fact a subset of the second—James Burnham, an architect of modern conservatism, once again commands our attention, principally for two books he wrote during his transit from Left to Right.

The Managerial Revolution (1941) is by far the better known, with its prediction, at times melodramatic, of a new era in which all the technological "super states," whether Communist, fascist, or democratic, will eventually resemble one another because each will have nurtured a leadership class of hidden policy intellectuals who wield more actual influence than the leaders they putatively serve.

But Burnham's sequel, *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* (1943), is the more wide-ranging and rigorous work. It is a series of close readings, at times reiterations, of the vision of politics advanced by thinkers from Dante up through modern theorists (principally Mosca, Michels, and Pareto). Burnham makes the case, provocatively if not always convincingly, that even in an ideal democracy the crucial ideas are necessarily formulated by "elites," whose theories originate, in the best Machiavellian sense, in the understanding that "no theory, no promises, no morality, no amount of good will, no religion will restrain power."

SAM TANENHAUS is editor of the New York Times Book Review. His latest book is *The Death of Conservatism*.

Alexander Waugh Can I have three? The book that most altered my perception of things is called the *Chaldean Account of Genesis* by George Smith, published in 1876. I read it in my late teens because it was the only book in the spare room of a house in which I was staying. Smith, a Victorian archaeologist, unearthed thousands of stone tablets from a Chaldean library that dated back to the 5th century B.C. and found broken fragments that, pieced together, told the biblical story of Genesis in Babylonian form—a gripping tale that shattered a lot of youthful illusions.

Who's read *Mozart and the Wolf Gang* by Anthony Burgess, a tribute to Mozart written for his bicentenary in 1991? It's very short and at first glance dismally pretentious. Written partly in prose, partly in verse, and partly as film script, it offers a kaleidoscope of snatched carnival conversations between Mozart and other composers sitting in heaven. Underneath Burgess's surface smartarsery is a beamish little book of keen perception