

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

and enlivened debate.

Then there's a smutty book called *Roget's Profanisaurus*, an offshoot of the English comic *Viz*, which describes itself as "Britain's leading toilet humour magazine." The *Profanisaurus* is essentially a dictionary of filthy words and idioms compiled with so much cleverness, wit, and complicated cross-referencing that the reader who consults it for one definition finds himself browsing indefinitely. *Profanisaurus* brings tears to my eyes and is honestly the funniest, most enlightening, and most enlightened book I know.

ALEXANDER WAUGH is the author of *Fathers and Sons: The Autobiography of a Family and, more recently, The House of Wittgenstein: A Family at War*.

Chilton Williamson Jr. *Travels in Arabia Deserta*

was first published by Cambridge University Press in 1888. Its author, Charles M. Doughty, an English Protestant trained as a geologist, suspected that the ruins of Medain Salih contained ancient inscriptions useful to biblical scholars. Disguised in Arab garb, he joined the Haj at Damascus on its way to Mecca and left the caravan at its closest approach to the ancient city. He found the ruins, but never the inscriptions.

Instead of returning to Damascus and England, Doughty spent the next two years in the late 1870s among the Bedouins as they traveled their seasonal *dira*, following their flocks on their transhumant course. Doughty made no secret of his faith as a *Nasrani* and refused to join his hosts in their daily obeisances to Mecca, an honesty for which he several times nearly paid with his life. Nevertheless, the tribesmen came to admire their guest. They invited him to remain with them and even offered their daughters in marriage as an inducement to stay.

Arabia Deserta is notable for the depth of its empathy for an almost impossibly foreign people and culture. Doughty was one of those artists on whom, as Henry James said, nothing is lost. The book is remarkable also for its literary style. Doughty believed that the English language had been in decline since the time of Spencer, and his own style is an astonishing imposition of Victorian prose upon England's literary golden age.

Travels in Arabia Deserta, which inspired T.E. Lawrence's work, is one of the great works of nonfiction in the English language. Cambridge should be commended for keeping the book in print for decades in a handsome paperback edition amounting to approximately 1,400 pages, published in two volumes.

CHILTON WILLIAMSON JR. is senior editor for books at *Chronicles* and the author of *The Conservative Bookshelf*.

Peter W. Wood Lewis Henry Morgan's *The American Beaver and His Works* (1868) is among those small, easily overlooked classics. It is what it sounds like: detailed observations on a bucktoothed rodent that devotes itself to hydraulic engineering. The writing is anything but fanciful. Morgan was a serious man with a scientific purpose. But his book grows and grows from mere external characteristics of beavers to a fugue on beaver dams and lodges, culminating in a chapter on "manifestations of the animal mind." He ultimately sees the beaver not just as a creature of instinct but as a "reasoning" animal. (So there, Aristotle!)

Morgan, though now largely forgotten, was a brilliant observer who can fairly be credited with inventing modern anthropology. His *League of the Ho-De'-No-Sau-Nee Or Iroquois* (1851) was the first scientific ethnography. But he was also a businessman, and it was on a trip to Michigan to look at a railroad he had invested in that the industrious beaver caught his eye. Morgan doesn't indulge in explicit analogies or overarching metaphors, but it is impossible to read *The American Beaver* without sensing Morgan's celebration of America itself, embodied in this intelligent animal's restless, inventive urge to build.

PETER W. WOOD is executive director of the *National Association of Scholars* and author of *A Bee in the Mouth: Anger in America Now*.

Peregrine Worsthorne

About 30 years ago, I gave a rave review to a book called *The London Dialogues*, which, in spite of most profoundly and originally addressing all the important issues of this or any other age—love, property, beauty, art, science, sex, equality, populism, race—has scarcely been read at all.

The trouble is that the author, David Hirst, did not so much contradict all the current intellectual fashions as rise above them, or rather look down upon them. The effect on me was like breathing fresh air—immensely bracing and refreshing if shockingly politically incorrect.

Hirst has subsequently published several more books that have also been largely ignored. For me, however, he is a bit of a genius, and it is my dream that in years to come his work will be discovered and appreciated, and I will be hailed—and you, too, dear reader—as among the first disciples to do this master justice.

PEREGRINE WORSTHORNE is a former editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*.