

munications, and members of the favored guild will be tempted to impose some form of enforced orthodoxy that will stifle the broad advance in all fronts that is necessary for the flourishing of a free society.

Ultimately, men need faith to function. They need confidence in their theories, even in the face of recalcitrant facts that do not seem to fit those theories at first. Without this kind of faith, life is impossible. Dr. Durovic needed such a personal commitment in his search for a cancer treatment, even as his AMA counterparts need theirs to deny Krebiozen's effectiveness. As Baily writes of Durovic's early experiments: "Most of the time he failed to extract anything. He blamed his methods, his choice of substances; he blamed everything except his theory. That he knew, with the intuition of a great

scientist, was correct." Precisely; research based on one's faith in an intuition is the very foundation of an advancing science. Without it, there is neither scientific breakthrough nor "normal" science. But men should be aware of this when they begin to study and when they make their pronouncements on what is or is not possible. If they fail to grasp the nature of the commitment based on faith that is necessarily involved in all scientific endeavor, they will fall into a very unscientific hypocrisy. That has been the weakness of organized medicine for the whole of its history. It is the hypocrisy of those who claim to speak for "respectable" medical research that is so galling — the hypocrisy, the arrogance and the sheer monopolistic power.

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Agnew The Unexamined Man: A Political Profile

by Robert Marsh
M. Evans and Company, Inc., \$5.95

There can be no doubt but that this book was intended for a specific constituency. Those people who thrive on *Nixon Agonistes* will gobble up this addition to the anti-Administration literature. In this biographical study of Agnew's political career, Marsh portrays the Vice President as a convictionless politician, an authoritarian personality, a thin-skinned man with a "hyper-reactive ego defense mechanism which was and is always maintained in hair trigger readiness," and "not unintelligent at least a political incompetent who rose to power in spite of his faults (his upward mobility, writes Marsh, was the 'Peter Principle in reverse').")

Marsh's study of Agnew's rise to power cannot be considered in any way a convincing examination of Agnew the man. Marsh's point of view, his assertions, his conclusions are all too jaundiced to be taken without great skepticism. Marsh's own political career, it is important to point out, was at one time tied closely to that of Agnew's. Therefore, there is much peevish criticism of Agnew here that looks too much like what would be expected from a disgruntled political opportunist whose own star fell when Agnew's was rising.

To understand why this book and its point of view must be approached skeptically, it is necessary to look at the unexamined Marsh. The dust jacket tells us that Marsh left Agnew's state administration in 1968 to become a public affairs consultant. What the capsule vita neglects to mention is the fact that Marsh became a Republican candidate in the primary for the Maryland Sixth District Congressional seat. His primary opponent in that contest was J. Glenn Beall, Jr., now the junior Senator from Maryland.

During the election, Marsh assured

me, and others as well I suppose, that he was "more conservative" than Beall. Indeed, his opposition to gun control legislation (which would have been popular in rural western Maryland), his support of Nixon's candidacy and positions on foreign and domestic issues were all designed to gain support from conservative voters in western Maryland. However, Marsh the author takes a different position. The author of this book takes the stance of an extreme civil libertarian and finds reason to side with New Left students and black militants.

Furthermore, he chides Agnew for not being more "progressive" while he was County Executive of Baltimore County and Governor of Maryland. As for Marsh's observation that Agnew is an insensitive man incapable of empathy for others, especially the poor

and disadvantaged, Marsh once remarked solemnly to me that voters were "cattle to be herded" by the successful candidate. Such remarks as these do not jive with the thinking of the author of this book who criticizes others for being coldhearted. Marsh's tergiversations in a period of only two years cannot be understood unless Marsh is a "political eunuch," or a man without enduring political convictions — his accusations against Agnew.

Marsh's showing on election day in September 1968 was microscopic. He came in last in a long list of candidates who were vying for the Congressional seat. After that, Marsh ceased to be in his public consultant's office for callers — especially if those callers were calling to collect his campaign debts.

As we reflect further on the fact that as an aide Marsh helped lift Agnew to power, we become more skeptical of Marsh's seriousness in this book. If Agnew was such a louse during those years while County Executive and Governor, and it was obvious that he was an incompetent all along, why did Marsh spend years contributing to his political stardom? Why did it take so long for Marsh to see the obvious evidence of Agnew's faults? Is Marsh a slow learner or has he some special reason for fault-finding now?

At the close of this book, the reader still feels that Agnew is an unexamined man. Much more must be done to understand the Agnew phenomenon in American politics, and it must be done by authors less prejudiced by their personal experiences and failures. Such books as Mr. Marsh's no more serve the cause of thoughtful, objective scholarship than those books written by campaign aides to ballyhoo the assets of their candidates.

W. Wesley McDonald

W. Wesley McDonald is a graduate student at the State University of New York and Editor-in-Chief of *The Alderberg Review*

The Legacy Of A Superfluous Man

Wick Allison

One afternoon not long ago I was sitting in the living room of a spacious old apartment near the Ala Wai Canal in the Waikiki section of Honolulu. The apartment had been built in a time when the demand for rental space had not transformed every inch of ground into stacks of cubicles designed to be inhabited only by moles and modern men. It had large windows, turn-of-the-century-style, which filled the room with light and admitted the breeze of island trade winds. This kind of architecturally planned expansiveness has largely disappeared, and I was not only pleased that the structure had defied the

promoters and their bulldozers for so long, but struck by an uncertain nostalgia for the world it represented.

I had felt the same nostalgia before, for I had recently arrived in the Islands after spending several dreary months in Texas, Louisiana and Georgia, courtesy of the United States Army. The South is my home and I love it, but I left it with an uneasy feeling. For decades it lay dormant, a neglected and still genteel cousin to the barbarian North, harboring its own customs and conventions, and dark, whispered secrets. Now every where in the South the talk is of money, how to get it and how to make it grow. Willie Morris, the

deposed *Harper's* editor, was right in saying that Atlanta and Dallas "reek with the smell of Yankee dollars."

It is the same with Honolulu. Once this city must have been one of the world's most beautiful spots. Today it is a land of glittering neon lights, multi-storied skyscrapers, bewildering traffic patterns and over-priced meals. Perhaps modern Hawaii is best expressed in a symbol: a new Holiday Inn rising from Waikiki, partially blocking the once majestic view of Diamond Head from the beach. Paradise has become real estate.

The facts are clear. We are faced with the prospect of seeing Atlanta and Honolulu levelled to the same dull mediocrity of a Cleveland and an Indianapolis as the nation continues to pay homage to that fatal euphemism: progress.

I know. You've heard it all before. Although the environmental return-to-nature fad has begun to decline (poor fads, they come and go with such frequency these days), its residual effect has been to make us believe we are a generation free of the outdated Chamber of Commerce think-big morality. Our collective naivete is touching. Sure commercialism stinks. But money, dear money, retains the fragrance of sweet perfume. If there has been a major transformation in human nature in the last few years, it has taken place so subtly that I have failed to notice it.

Skepticism requires companionship; the optimist, the guy with the go-getter mentality, can and often does exist in a vacuum. It was the need for a friend's solace on that winsome Hawaiian afternoon that made me rise from the overstuffed couch in the living room and shuffle upstairs. I began rumaging through a bookcase overflowing with gray tomes and bright book-of-the-month club offerings, and there, sandwiched between John Updike's latest attempt at a novel and a long-forgotten history, I found Albert Jay Nock's *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*. The book was old, scarred and dusty, as befits one published in 1943, and generously dog-eared and underlined, as befits one read and re-read by three generations of seekers.

Nock is a compelling writer. I started with a passage or two, went on to a chapter, and ended by reading the whole book. His style is delightful; he arranges words with the precision of a drill sergeant marshalling a parade. He views the human scene with the wonderment and disdain of an Olympian. He gives credence and coherence to vague feelings, order to chaotic impressions. He explains it all.

Nock described himself as a superfluous man in all seriousness, although the perceptive reader is bound to feel that he had his tongue firmly in cheek. He felt he was superfluous because he knew he was superior. He was in every way a gentleman of the Old Order — talented, cultivated, educated and civilized. As an essayist he was the finest American prose writer of the earlier Twentieth century. As an editor he produced a publication widely regarded as the best American magazine in content and style, the original *Free-*

man. As a scholar he wrote *Jefferson*, the most intimate and satisfying personal portrait of our early American deity. He was a man of excellence, and he did not like it here.

Nock's rejection of America was more a resignation to the inevitable than a self-conscious rebellion. In his younger years he had been in the forefront of the progressive movement, pressing the causes of reform. He had been a man very much in tune with his times, riding the waves which crested in the New Deal. But Nock was not the sort of man to be swept by a momentary enthusiasm; his critical faculties improved with experience. Soon he was able to discern a shift in the direction of liberalism, one which was pulling it away from its old values to an unsettling preoccupation with theoretical absurdities; worse, its partisans were actually beginning to put those absurdities into practice. By the time the New Deal arrived Nock had gradually disassociated himself from the liberal movement. His hero was Jefferson, and Roosevelt was a poor substitute. His model of the politician was Burke; the national spotlight seemed to focus on an altogether different type. By the end of the 1930s he found himself being called a conservative, to his own surprise. He accepted the epithet, but he maintained his earlier claim to the title of radical. He saw no contradiction in the terms: "The antithesis of radical is superficial." Perhaps the true Conservative is the only man concerned about going to the root of things, the only man concerned about seeing things as they really are, the only man with the courage to be truly radical.

In 1941 Nock retired to write the *Memoirs*, his greatest and most lasting achievement. The book is not autobiography in the usual sense. It is reminiscent of the *Education of Henry Adams*, although devoid of the minutiae which clutter that remarkable history and free of the gloominess which pervades it. In fact, the reader interested in Nock has to look elsewhere for the details of his life. Nock described the purpose of his non-autobiographical autobiography in the preface to the first edition: "... every person of intellectual quality develops some sort of philosophy of existence; he acquires certain settled views of life and of human society; and if he would trace out the origin and course of the ideas contributing to that philosophy, he might find it an interesting venture. It is certainly true that whatever a man may do or say, the most significant thing about him is what he thinks; and significant also is how he came to think it, why he continued to think it, or, if he did not continue, what were the influences which caused him to change his mind. In short.... (this) is a history of ideas, the autobiography of a mind in relation to the society in which it found itself."

Thus this book tells not only of one man's unique intellectual journey, but of the twists and curves in the road, the dangers along the way. It tells the story of a mind reacting to the forces around it, trying to comprehend the mysteries

of social intercourse and setting its own bearing and direction amid the general confusion of a badly confused age. Nock is a man of many political dimensions, a liberal Jeffersonian who becomes a reforming Georgist and a devout Spencerian, then encounters two decades of disillusionment and dismay which compel him in increasing degrees to turn to Aristotle, Burke and Adams. Nock never abandons his early heroes, he merely becomes more selective in quoting them. He does not rush with open arms into the Conservative ranks; he finds himself recognizing, appreciating and even defending, after a while, the Conservative critique. He does this all with a wry humor and gently probing skepticism which is as enlightening as it is enjoyable.

The dominant theme of the *Memoirs* is the superfluity of the man of excellence in the modern world. Americans do not frown upon the life of the mind, they ignore the possibility of its existence. In fact, by the 1940s Americans (and most Westerners) were arriving at the point where value could only be conceived in terms of dollars and cents. The only way the average American could appreciate a Voltarian essay, a Beethoven sonata or a Rembrandt portrait was to know its price on the open market. Nock believed that three immutable laws were in operation in America and that they had enthroned a reign of materialism in American life more base and disintegrating to the human spirit than any tyrant would dare impose. He called them, respectively, Gresham's Law (Sir Thomas Gresham invented the famous formulation), Epstean's Law (Nock's friend Edward Epstean suggested this one to him), and the law of diminishing returns. Gresham's Law states that bad money drives out the good. Epstean's Law declares that man always intends to satisfy his needs and desires with the least possible exertion. The law of diminishing returns is the same one you learned in your high school economics course. Nock thought these laws could be applied to every realm of human activity: "By luck I stumbled on the discovery that Epstean's law, Gresham's law, and the law of diminishing returns operate as inexorably in the realm of culture; of politics; of social organization, religious and secular; as they do in the realm of economics."

In America the dominance of these forces resulted from a pervasive economism (Nock's own word for materialism) and produced the rule of the plutocracy. "In every civilization there is a dominant spirit or idea which gives a definite or distinct tone to the whole social life of the civilization. It determines... the individual's line of approach to life, establishes his views of life, and prescribes his demands on life." Henry Adams correctly identified the Virgin as the dominant figure of the high Middle Ages; in the 20th Century it is the dollar sign: "Go and get it!" was the sum of the practical philosophy presented to America's young manhood by all the voices of the age... Now I was looking at the great avatars of their practical philo-

sophy, the Carnegies, Rockefellers, Fricks, Hills, Huntingtons, of the period. I asked myself whether any amount of wealth would be worth having if — as one most evidently must — one had to become just like these men in order to get it. To me, at least, decidedly it would not; I should be a superfluous man in the scuffle for riches. I observed their qualities and practices closely, considered the furniture of their minds, remarked their scale of values, and could come to no other conclusion. Well, then, could a society built to a complete realization of every ideal of the economism they represented be permanently satisfactory to the best reason and spirit of man? Could it be called a civilized society? The thing seemed preposterous, absurd... After wealth, science, invention had done all for such a society that they could do, it would remain without savour, without depth, *uninteresting*, and withal horrifying."

Nock's slow conversion to Conservatism became more pronounced as he began to identify the rule of economism with social democracy and the rise of Ortega y Gasset's mass-man. A direct correlation exists between social democracy and the impulse toward egalitarianism which levels everything to a dull mediocrity. The man of excellence is democracy's casualty. Only a society contained by prescriptive values can comfortably accommodate variety; the society which is only nominally free, the liberal society, promotes dullness as a virtue. A society founded on the premise of bestowing happiness to every man, instead of protecting every man's right to pursue his own happiness, is a society which negates freedom and digs at the roots of order. Nock believed that "Western society had everywhere lost is stability and that is collapse was nearer than one might think." He agreed with his old friend, Ralph Adams Cram, that this was an age "...in which all sense of direction had been lost, all consistency of motive in action; all standards of value abolished or reversed ... With no lucid motive for doing anything in particular, self-appointed arbiters in almost every field of human activity from painting to politics were starting the first thing that came into their heads, tiring of it in a week, and lightly starting something else... The futile philosophies, the curious religions, and the unearthly superstitions of the last days of Rome were matched and beaten by a fantastic farrago of auto-intoxication, while manners and morals lay under a dark eclipse."

If all this sounds like the prophecy of a Jeremiah or the rantings of a manic-depressive, it is only because I have culled those selections which demonstrate Nock's rather skeptical outlook. A far greater portion of the book is devoted to sparkling observations on the foibles and conceits of the human animal and a cheerful recollection of a life well spent. Nock was not a man known for walking around with a black cloud over his head. Professor Crunden relates one instance which gives us an insight into the capriciousness of Nock's mind: during the height of his career when he was editing the *Freeman* and

contributing heavily to popular periodicals, it was widely circulated among New York intellectual and literary circles that the only way to contact him was to leave a note under a certain rock in Central Park. No man with the ingenuity to protect his privacy to that degree could be boring.

You see, perhaps, why I love Nock and why I return to him in an attempt to understand the Holiday-Inn-mentality of my fellow countrymen. Coming from the South, seeing Hawaii again, recalling the things over which I have recently marvelled and dispaired, I find in Nock the clearest and most striking description of our departure from the Platonic goal of the good life. L. Brent Bozell had said, "The story of how the free society has come to take

priority over the good society is the story of the decline of the West." That quote has gained authority with me, if only because Albert Jay Nock has shown to my satisfaction the immense irony of history: that the "free" society corrodes and corrupts the capacity of free men to reach beyond themselves to touch the stars. "Neibuhr was right," said Goethe, "when he saw a barbarous age coming. It is already here, we are in it, for in what does barbarism consist, if not in the failure to appreciate what is excellent." □

For more literature by Albert J. Nock, contact the Nockian Society of 30 South Broadway, Irvington, New York, 10533. no officers, no dues, no meetings.

— RJM

The Politics of Disorder

by Dr. Arnold Weber
Basic Books, \$6.95

Something disconcerting happened to Arnold Weber on his way back to the University of Chicago. He was leaving a position at the Office of Management and Budget when he was waylaid and installed as Executive Director of the Cost of Living Council.

At a recent briefing for Senate staff, Dr. Weber mused about the awesome power the Council wields. The power derives from a law containing 406 words, the important ones being "The President is authorized to issue such orders and regulations as he may deem appropriate to stabilize prices, rents, wages and salaries" and "The President may delegate the performance of any function under this title to such officers, departments and agencies of the United States as he may deem appropriate." Is it not curious, Weber said, that such lean legislation can have such large consequences.

If Weber makes it back to the University, he should walk down the Midway to the political science department for a chat with Prof. Theodore J. Lowi, who has written two books (one and a half, really) on the problems, practical and philosophical, arising from massive delegations of authority to Government agencies.

The first book was *The End of Liberalism*, a stern indictment with a timid solution appended. The indictment was of interest group "pluralist" government which Lowi said results in a kind of feudalism: government favors bestowed by law, through executive agencies, on groups powerful enough to force a payoff. These groups include every major economic interest.

Lowi's proposed solution was "juridical democracy," which he equated with a restored rule-of-law. He contrasted this with "policy without law" which, he says (plausibly, in my judgment) we have now with the practice of governing "through broad grants of authority to administrators." With juridical democracy, the Supreme Court would declare "invalid and unconstitutional any delegation of power to an administrative agency that is not accompanied

by clear standards of implementation." That would eliminate "all vagueness in legislative delegation of power."

Now that might be a good thing. But it would hardly constitute the end of liberalism. Still, Lowi is sticking to his popguns in his latest book, *The Politics of Disorder* which, he says is an "extension" of *The End of Liberalism*.

The rhetoric is hotter, the argument less rigorous, and the attention to concrete policies, which was the strength of the last book, is gone. It is hard to avoid the suspicion that these changes reflect a reluctance to confront a really radical thought: the conservatives may have a point.

Maybe there are somethings that government just should not do at all because it will always turn them over to agencies that are literally irresponsible.

Does Lowi believe that (say) the Interstate Commerce Commission does an unsatisfactory job of regulating truck freight rates? If so, is this an example of an unfortunate exercise of discretionary power that should not be delegated by the legislature? If so, what does he propose? Should Congress set truck rates? How would that improve things?

Congress does not delegate the power to set sugar quotas. Congress sets them. Does Lowi like the result? Does he like the effect of such activity on the legislative process?

What does Lowi think causes legislators to grant discretionary power to the executive branch? Legislators are not shrinking violets. They do not make a habit of giving up power. Does Lowi wonder why they delegate the power to set truck freight rates? Can he envision what would happen if 100 Senators set out to promote their constituents interests, in a floor, fight over freight rates? It would be instructive for Lowi to identify the relevant differences between those matters on which Congress does and does not delegate its power.

Lowi does not understand the most interesting possibility of his "juridical